

GRANDMA ELLIOT'S FARMHOUSE

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Mary E. Ireland

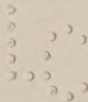
GRANDMA ELLIOT'S FARMHOUSE:

A Story for Girls and Boys.

BY

MARY E. IRELAND,

*Translator of "The First School Year," "The Shepherd's Family,"
"The Siberian Exile," "Adolph's Victories," "Christian
Beck's Grandson," "In Fair Silesia," "The School
on Luneburg Heath," "Driven Out," Etc.*



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Gift
Mr. E. Ireland
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TO
HER DEAR LITTLE GRANDSON,
GEORGE HOWARD IRELAND,
THIS STORY FOR LITTLE PEOPLE,
WRITTEN AS A COMPANION TO "THE FIRST SCHOOL YEAR,"
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

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GREETING

TO ALL SUNDAY-SCHOOL PUPILS.

As a teacher, I greet you, dear youthful friends,
Whether here or beyond the blue sea ;
And that you may always be happy as now,
I give in this greeting the key :
“It is duty to God, and good will to men ;”
Then each day will a happy day be.

Your Superintendents are leaders indeed,
In all that is good and true ;
Your love and respect you should give them, dear ones,
For this is most truly their due :
As schools you are blest in having such friends,
They are priceless in worth to you.

The good seed they sow will spring into life,
Though now perhaps overtrod,
Or seemingly lost in a desert place,
Or choked by tares, or hidden in sod,
It will live through the ages, and still bear fruit,
When they have gone home to God.

For, as fogs disperse when the clear sun shines,
So time to your memory will bring,
The lessons you thoughtlessly hear to-day,
The hymns which each Sabbath you sing ;
And thinking of comrades who shared with you then,
The tears to your eyes may spring.

When out in the world you go, dear ones,
To join in its toil and strife,
You will look back on hours you passed in your school,
As the sweetest and best of your life;
And will gratefully feel that the knowledge gained there,
Is your armor when tumult is rife.

To the North and the South, the East and the West,
Your eager young feet will soon run;
For we are but pilgrims, and ever will be,
Until life's race be done;
And we lie with still and folded hands,
Our rest forever won.

In after years, when with voice or pen,
You are leaders in church or state,
On the side of the right, which may not be might,
With conscience clear may you wait;
And our triumph will be that you are enrolled
With the good, if not with the great.

Of your good work in new and perhaps distant homes,
The echoes may reach us e'er long;
And though echo of music is not the ring
Of the living, breathing song,
Yet your teacher's heart will rejoice to know
That their precepts are passing on.

For, Phoenix-like, your new life shall spring,
From the ashes of the past;
New thoughts, new hopes, new energies,
Will thrill you while life shall last;
And to do God's will may it be your aim,
Wherever your lot is cast.

We teachers will cherish the thought of that past,
We will keep its memory green ;
It's little trials will be our pride,
Our jewels of golden sheen,
When we hear that in duty each boy is a king,
And every girl a queen.

And thus in this volume as Preface I give,
This greeting with heartfelt joy,
And pray that the blessing of *Peace* may be
Ever yours, and without alloy ;
And for this may the blessing of God ever rest,
On every dear girl and dear boy.

Washington, D. C.

GRANDMA ELLIOT'S FARMHOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

GOOD NEWS.

“OH, Sophie! wait a minute; I have something to tell you!” and Ellen Forester, having from her window seen her friend, Sophie Wilbur, coming down the street, ran out to tell her the good news.

“What is it?” asked Sophie, full of interest.

“I am going to Grandma Elliott’s, in the country, and am to go to school there.”

“But there will be no school in summer.”

“Yes, there is to be one for little girls and boys, and mamma says it will be a good place for me to begin school.”

Sophie was for a moment too surprised to speak, but stood looking at the bright face of Ellen.

“But you always said you were going to school with me on our first day, and now you

are going away," she said, with tears of disappointment in her pretty blue eyes.

"I did not know that I was going to the country until mamma told me just now, and oh! I am so glad: I always have such nice times there."

"But why are you going?" asked Sophie, who could take no pleasure in this sudden change of plans.

"Because Aunt Lizzie, grandma's daughter, is going away to teach music in a boarding school, and I am to go for company for grandma, and will go to school where mamma went when she was a little girl like me."

"I did not think you would be so glad to leave me," said Sophie tearfully; "who said for you to come?"

"Grandma said it in a letter, and mamma said that we would go to your house after supper and tell you all about it; then I saw you coming and ran out to tell you."

"I thought we would have such nice times playing school with our dolls," said Sophie, with tears running down her plump cheeks; "and now I will be so lonely, and we can't talk about school, where we are to go in September, when I am to stop for you every morning on my way there."

"Let us run in and tell mamma about it;

maybe she will write to Grandma Elliot and ask her to let you come when we tell her you will be lonely without me."

Sophie's tears were chased away, and her cheeks grew rosy with hope, as, catching hands, they ran in and up the stairs to the nursery, where Mrs. Forester sat sewing with the cradle beside her, in which slept Ellen's baby brother.

"Mamma, Sophie says she will be lonely without me; won't you please write to Grandma Elliot and ask her to let Sophie come too and go to school with me?" cried Ellen the moment she caught sight of her.

Mrs. Forester looked up at the eager, hopeful faces and smiled. "Would Sophie's aunt allow her to go?" she asked.

"Yes, I am sure she would," replied Sophie quickly; "she said this morning that when I started to school she would not expect me to be of much help to her, to play with the baby and take him out in his carriage."

"Then I will tell you that in mother's letter this morning she said that if your Aunt Margaret were willing to have you come, she would be glad to have you there with Ellen. She said it would be good for you to have a visit to the country, and Ellen would be more contented if you were with her."

"Oh! may I run and tell her?" asked Sophie.

"Yes; and tell her that I was coming as soon as we finished tea to tell her what mother said, and ask her if she would let you go. Here is mother's letter; you can give it to her to read."

"Dear mamma, let me go with Sophie and help her ask her Aunt Margaret," said Ellen eagerly.

"Certainly you may; and if she does not consent, I hope that Sophie will not vex her by fretting at the disappointment. I did not intend her to know of it until I had seen Mrs. Endicott and asked her consent."

"I did not know that, mamma; you did not tell me not to tell Sophie."

"No, I did not think you would see her before evening; but now that she does know it, I hope she will be a good girl and not trouble her kind aunt."

The little girls ran away, and soon reached Sophie's home, only two squares away. To the joy of both, Mrs. Endicott gave glad consent, for she saw the pleasure and benefit a summer in the country would be to her orphan niece, the only child of a loved sister, who, in dying, had given the little girl into her care.

"I will miss you, dear," she said to Sophie,

“but I am very grateful to Mrs. Elliot for inviting you to that beautiful home where I loved to go when a child. It was only across a meadow from the village at Edgermond where I lived, and Ellen’s mother and I were school-mates and playmates, and have always been friends.”

Ellen and Sophie looked at each other in pleased surprise, for in the six years of their lives they had not happened to hear that Mrs. Forester and Mrs. Endicott had known each other all their lives, had played together when little children, had their play-house under a great shady apple tree in the orchard, and with their dolls and bits of broken china and glass, kept house through the long summer afternoons. Now it seemed almost too good to be true that they were to be all the summer together there.

“You are to go on Monday, and this is Wednesday,” said Mrs. Endicott, looking again at the letter.

“Yes, grandma’s farmer is coming to town in the market wagon, and is to take us back with him. Oh, Sophie, won’t it be splendid to ride in a great long wagon?”

Sophie clapped her plump little hands with delight. “How long will it take us to get to your grandmother’s?” she asked.

Ellen looked to Mrs. Endicott to answer; she had never heard any one say.

"It will take several hours, for it is more than thirty miles. It will be quite late in the evening I think when you reach the farm-house, for the one who comes for you will have to let the horses feed and rest at noon, and have his dinner before he sets out for Edgermond."

"Did you ever go in a wagon, Aunt Margaret?" asked Sophie.

"No, I have never been there but once since I left it, and that time your uncle and myself went in a carriage."

"Don't you like to go there?"

"Yes, dear; the village of Edgermond is pleasant, and the neighborhood beautiful, but I was like yourself an orphan, and lived there with my aunt and uncle. He died and my aunt went West to live with her son, and I had married and come here to live. I have no relatives there now to visit."

"But it will be far nicer to go in a big wagon than a carriage," said Ellen, joyously.

"Yes, it will be for you little people, for you will have more room to stir about. Soon there will be a railway from this city past Edgermond, then there will be no need of going in either carriage or wagon."

"Will you take Matilda?" asked Sophie earnestly of Ellen.

“Yes, and Janette and Sylvia; they would be lonesome when Matilda was gone.”

“I will take Sarah Jane, and Amanda, and Julia,” said Sophie joyously. “Come, let us tell them we are going to the country.”

They ran lightly down the steps to the back porch, which being enclosed at the ends, made a fine place for Sophie’s dolls to live in the beautiful May weather.

Ellen forgot all about her supper at home in the talk that followed in regard to the articles of clothing to be taken for their dollies; and they agreed that as the country was much cooler than the city, cloaks and sacks must not on any account be left at home.

CHAPTER II.

AN UNINTENDED VISIT.

“**Y**OU must go this afternoon and tell your grandpa, and aunt, and Uncle Forester that you are going to the country on Monday,” said Ellen’s mother the next day.

“Yes, and Cousin Leo; won’t he be surprised to hear that we are going?” replied Ellen joyously. “May I ask Sophie to go with me to tell them?”

“Yes, I think her aunt can spare her, although she told me last evening that she intends making two new print dresses for Sophie this week, and may need Sophie to help take care of baby.”

“But it won’t take us long to run around to Uncle Forester’s; it is only five squares away. This morning I will wash and iron my dollies’ clothes. What will I take my clothes and dollies in, mamma?”

“Your papa is intending to give you a nice little trunk, and one to Sophie; you can tell her of it this afternoon.”

“Oh, that will be splendid; will they be just alike, mamma?”

"Yes, if you both wish it; he said that you and Sophie could stop at the store this afternoon on your way to your Uncle Forester's and choose them. We first thought that he would send one to you and one to Sophie before you saw them at the store, but we think it will be of use to you to learn to choose for yourselves, and he will help you to make a wise choice."

"I am so glad that papa has a trunk store; won't Sophie be glad to have a trunk all her own; may I run up now and tell her, mamma?"

"Yes, it would be as well not to wait until afternoon, as Mrs. Endicott will then not have to think of a trunk for Sophie, and she can fit the dresses before you go to your aunt's if it suits her to do so."

Ellen ran away and found Sophie in the play-house in the porch packing Sarah Jane's, Amanda's, and Julia's clothes in a paper box that Mrs. Endicott had given her for the journey.

"And see, Ellen," she said in glee, "I have made this lovely wrap this morning for Julia," and through the glass lid of a small box Ellen saw something the color of the sky, through a net work of lace like a fleecy cloud.

"Oh, it is lovely!" she said, "take it out that I may see it in my hands."

The three-cornered piece of light-blue satin

was very dainty with its border of lace, and was neatly sewed.

"Where did you get the things to make such a lovely shawl?" asked Ellen. "I do wish Matilda had one, her cloth sack is too warm for this beautiful weather."

"Look here!" cried Sophie, as she drew forth another spool-cotton box, exactly like the first, in which was a green-silk shawl with an edging of black lace.

"Aunt gave me all, and I made them, and you can have whichever you like best for Matilda," said Sophie.

"You always like blue, Sophie, and I like green, so I will take the green."

"I was not going to tell you till we got in the country, and then surprise you, but I had to," said Sophie.

"And oh, Sophie, I have the greatest thing to tell you; papa is going to give us trunks to take our clothes and our dollies in to the country; we are to go to Aunt Forester's this afternoon and tell them all that we are going, and are to go by papa's store and choose our trunks. Ask your Aunt Margaret if you can go."

Before the sentence was fairly spoken, Sophie was half way up the steps to the nursery, and to her delight, Mrs. Endicott was not only willing to have her to go, but said that she was

very glad that she was to have a trunk, and told her to thank Mr. Forester for his kindness.

There was now so much to talk of, that Mrs. Endicott had dinner upon the table before it came into Ellen's mind that it was time to go home.

She hurried away, and when she got there found her father had come from his store and was about to sit down to dinner.

"Come, little daughter," he said, "take your place quickly, I must be back as soon as possible."

Ellen obeyed, and folded her hands to listen to her father's prayer for a blessing upon the food set before them, and hurried as he was, time was taken to ask it in his usual reverent manner, and also to chat with his wife and daughter in his usual cheerful way.

"Sophie will go with me this afternoon, mamma, her Aunt Margaret said she may; and oh, mamma, you ought to see the lovely silk shawls she made for her Julia and my Matilda! Her Aunt Margaret gave her the silk and lace, and she gave her a box to carry her dollie's clothes in; won't you give me one, mamma, to put Matilda's and Janet's and Sylvia's in?"

"Mamma need not put on her studying cap to think of a box she can spare for you until you have been to the store," said her father,

with a glance at Mrs. Forester, and both looked at Ellen and smiled.

Ellen did not see this, she was too busy thinking of the many pleasant things that she and Sophie had been talking of; life was very sweet to Ellen.

Dinner was finished, her father returned to the store and her mother to the nursery, and Ellen ran to the kitchen to tell Bridget of the many pleasant things that were happening that day.

"And there is something else just as pleasant as what you have told me," said Bridget, laughing goodnaturedly, and looking very wise.

"What is it, Bridget? O Bridget! won't you tell me?" and Ellen held her by the dress, or rather was dragged along by it, for Bridget was on her way to the dining-room to remove the dishes.

"No indaade, its a secret," and Bridget shook herself loose, and with a skip and a bound was in the dining-room busy at work.

"O Bridget, I will give you that nice orange grandpa sent me last evening by Leo, if you will only tell me."

"Not for all the oranges in the whole wurreld," laughed the fifteen-year-old Bridget gayly; "oranges are plenty, but secrets are scarce."

"Does mamma know it?"

"Indaade and she doos know that same."

"And papa, does he know it?"

"Indaade and he doos."

"I will give you the orange if you will tell me how you know it, Bridget."

"Bring the orange," said Bridget.

Ellen flew to her play-house in one corner of the dining-room, and brought it.

"Now, Bridget, who told you?"

"Nobody."

"Then you shall not have the orange," and Ellen held it behind her back.

"But I heard it, indaade I did, Miss Ellen," insisted Bridget, her small gray eyes sparkling with glee; "but as nobody told me, half the orange is all the pay I ask for tellin' you how I know it."

Ellen flew to the table for the carving knife, and in a moment two halves of a beautiful large orange lay ready to be eaten.

"Now, Bridget, how did you hear it?"

"Your father telled your mother while I was a bringin' in the dinner. It's to be a surprise."

"There is your half of the orange, Bridget, and you may have this half if you will tell me what it is."

"But if your father or mother wanted you to

know it they would tell you, and it wouldn't be right for me to tell you."

"Did they tell you not to tell me?"

"No; I don't think they know that I was listening to what they were sayin', but I was."

"Then papa and mamma would say that you ought not to have told me anything about it, or even let me know that you knew it. They would say that it is not honorable because you know that they do not wish me to know it."

"It is that same I am thinkin' my own self, Miss Ellen," said Bridget, "and I'll give you this half orange if you don't tell them I told you."

"I won't tell them, Bridget, unless they ask me, so you eat your half and I will eat mine."

The affair being happily settled, the orange was eaten, and at that moment Sophie came, and Ellen hurried to dress for the call at the store, and then to her Uncle Forester's, and almost forgot Bridget and the secret.

It would be very hard to find two happier children than Ellen and Sophie while choosing trunks from the many dark and light leather ones which Mr. Forester directed one of his clerks to show them.

Sophie had taken Julia, and Ellen had taken Matilda, but had no help from them; and it is doubtful if they could have made a choice had not Mr. Forester helped them.

He pointed out two pretty ones, with places in them for hats and shoes, and another place for handkerchiefs, and the girls gladly agreed with his choice. They were of light leather, exactly alike, and strong and well made.

"We will keep them here until to-morrow," he said, "and have your names put upon them if you would like it done."

"Yes, papa, we will leave them, won't we, Sophie?" said Ellen, gleefully, and Sophie agreed willingly to such a pleasant plan.

Now came the surprise of which Bridget had hinted; two neat little trunks for their dollies' clothes, made in the same style of the larger ones, with tiny places for hats and ribbons, or any other use the dollies choose to make of them.

Two happier little girls could not have been found than Ellen and Sophie, neither of whom had seen trunks so small. Ellen had gone to her father's store ever since she could remember, but did not see them, for the reason that they were not there, Mr. Forester having bought them that morning for them.

"I suppose the dollies would like to have their names upon their trunks, would they not?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, papa; but I am afraid the three names will not go on, and the trunk must be-

long to all of them, and Sophie will want her dollies' trunk to belong to all her dollies."

"There will be no trouble about that," smiled her father, "we will put only the initials on them."

"What are initials, papa?"

"The first letter of their first and last names, and of the middle names, if they have them. Let me see, I think your favorite is Matilda, so we will have M. first."

"Yes, and then Janett's and Sylvia's."

"Very good; the M. and a period will be followed by J. and a period, and finish with S. and a period."

"That will be splendid; O papa, you are the very best person to plan," and Ellen looked at her father with great admiration and pride.

"Thank you, dear, for the compliment; now comes Sophie's dollies' names. I think I have heard of Sarah Jane."

"She is the oldest," said Sophie, "then comes Amanda and Julia."

"Sarah having two names, we will have to put four letters instead of three upon your dollies' trunk."

"But they will want the same number as Ellen's dollies; Sarah must only have one name; she shall not be Jane any more."

Amused at the speed with which Sarah Jane

was forced to drop part of her name to suit the occasion, Mr. Forester wrote down S. and a period, A. and a period, and J. with a period, and putting each slip in the trunk to which it belonged the children thanked him heartily, and then went on their way to Uncle Forester's, the brother of Ellen's father.

Aunt Forester was out calling upon friends, but Grandfather Forester welcomed them cordially.

"Why, why!" he exclaimed, "here is my dear little granddaughter Ellen, and her friend Sophie, and each has a doll in her arms; did they cry to come with you?"

"No, grandpa," said Ellen, "but they needed fresh air; and O grandpa, I have the greatest news to tell you, Sophie and I are going to Grandma Elliott's to stay all summer and go to school."

"To stay all summer; well, well, that is news indeed; how will you get there—in a balloon?"

"No," laughed Ellen, "Mr. Watson, grandma's farmer, is coming to market on Monday, and will take us to grandma's in his great market wagon. Won't we have a splendid time?"

"Nothing to prevent it that I can see," said grandpa, heartily. "Farmer Watson is a kind

man and good driver, I have known him from a boy."

"Why, did he live here in Baltimore, grandpa?"

"No; but grandpa lived near Edgermond," laughed the old gentleman, "Farmer Watson's father and I were schoolmates."

"But, grandpa, I haven't told you all; papa gave Sophie and me trunks to take our clothes in, and a dear little trunk for each of our dollies' clothes, and our names and dollies' names upon them."

"Wonderful! wonderful! Let me see, how many dolls have you?"

"Three—Matilda, Janette and Sylvia," said Ellen.

"And how many has Sophie?"

"Three—Sarah, Amanda and Julia."

"Then six little trunks are required for dollies' outfits?"

Ellen and Sophie laughed at his astonished face.

"No, grandpa, you are not counting right; Sophie has a little trunk for her dollies' clothes and I have a little trunk for my dollies' clothes."

"But you said a little trunk for each dollie's clothes," laughed grandpa.

"So I did; but you understand now, don't you grandpa?"

"I think so ; and wish your uncle, and aunt, and Leo were here that you might tell them all these wonderful things. But I will try to remember all you have told me, unless you will stay and take tea and see them."

No, grandpa, we have so much to do at home, but this is only Thursday, and we are not to go until Monday, and we will come again."

"Very good, see that you do;" then the children kissed him good-bye, and left for home.

In passing a dwelling in the next street they saw a hearse and several coaches standing in waiting before a door with crape upon it.

"Let us get into that one," said Sophie, nodding toward the last coach, "and wait until the people come out of the house."

Ellen thought this an excellent idea, and with their dolls in their arms climbed in quickly, and were scarcely seated, when the family, followed by friends, came out and took their places in the coaches.

Ellen and Sophie were so interested in watching them that they forgot to get out ; nor did they notice that the driver of their coach was on the box until it was in motion, and they found themselves following the others.

This was so charming that they delayed calling to the driver to stop, and then Sophie said

that they might as well ride to the cemetery and come back in the coach, and Ellen agreed.

So on they went until the city was left behind, and they were rolling along a smooth road, and past green fields and fragrant, cool woods, and scented the fresh air, delighted with all.

When the cemetery was reached there was a number of people to meet the family and their friends, and as soon as the grave was filled they took the ladies home with them to a large farmhouse near by, and the gentlemen returned to the city in the coaches.

Ellen and Sophie did not notice that the coaches had gone, but went with the children of the farm-house, who joyfully took charge of them, guided them to the gardens, the orchards, the dove-cote, the spring in the woods, and other points of interest about the farm.

Ellen and Sophie were having a fine visit, and when the supper bell rang for supper went in with the children.

"Why, whose little girls are these?" asked the lady of the house in surprise.

No one knew; the guests from the city who saw them in the cemetery, supposed they belonged to the neighborhood, and thought no more of it until they met them at the table with their dolls.

It never came into Ellen's and Sophie's

minds that they would have to remain over night, nor that their relatives would be anxious about them; nor did the kind people at the farm-house speak of it, knowing that it would make them unhappy and do no good.

"It is impossible for them to go back to the city to-night," said the lady, in a low tone, to her guests. "There is no train until midnight, and there is no one that I can send with a message. Their parents will be terribly anxious, not knowing where they are."

"There is nothing to be done but to keep them here to-night, and take them with us to the city in the morning train," replied the guests.

And so to the delight of Ellen and Sophie, and the other children, they stayed and played games on the lawn until bed-time, then went to a pleasant room, slept soundly all night, and were up in time for a good breakfast in the morning.

But while Ellen and Sophie were enjoying the visit, three families in the city would not have slept a minute the whole night had it not been for God's kindness to them all in allowing Leo to bring a message to them which was a great comfort.

When it had grown near tea-time the evening before, Mrs. Endicott had expected Sophie every moment, but did not feel much alarmed,

as she knew that she and Ellen were to go to Uncle Forester's, where perhaps they had stayed until Ellen's tea-time, and she was now at Ellen's taking supper. She was surprised that she had stayed, without running home to ask permission, as was the custom.

But she grew terribly anxious when Bridget came to see if Ellen was there. She had been to Ellen's Uncle Forester's and heard that the two little girls had left there several hours before to come home, but had not come, and Mr. and Mrs. Forester were in great distress of mind.

The police were notified and the search kept up till late in the evening, when to the great relief of all, Leo came running to tell Ellen's parents that a coachman's son had told him that no one went in the coach he drove that afternoon to the cemetery except two little girls with dolls.

Although but ten years of age, Leo was thoughtful enough to take the name and address of the coachman, and Mr. Forester went to see him, and was very grateful for what he heard.

The coachman thought that Ellen and Sophie were friends of the family, and had a place in the funeral procession. He had seen them going with the others to the farm-house, and thought nothing else but that they had a right

to go. He assured the anxious father that they would be well cared for, and would come back to Baltimore with the other guests in the morning.

He was right in this; they did come, as cheery as robins, delighted with their visit, and in charge of one of the ladies who had been one of the guests of the mistress of the farmhouse, who was her cousin.

Mrs. Forester and Mrs. Endicott thanked her sincerely for her kindness, and both ladies wrote that day to the mistress of the beautiful country home, thanking her for her kindness to Ellen and Sophie and inviting her to visit them.

"All has turned out better than we feared, my dear child," said Mrs. Forester to Ellen, "but you must never, never act in that way again. You will not realize until you are older how your father and I suffered in not knowing where you were."

"Oh mamma, I promise that we will never do the like again. We thought we would stay in the coach until the people were ready to come in; but none came, and we forgot."

"You had no right in there, and that led to your going to the farm-house where you were not invited. It was through want of thought, but that want we are told sometimes brings as much trouble to a person as want of heart."

CHAPTER III.

BY HIS GRANDFATHER'S HEARTH.

MAKING ready for the visit to the country went on with speed in both families.

By Friday evening Sophie's two new dresses were made, pressed, neatly folded, and put in the new trunk with the others. Handkerchiefs, ruffles, pins and hair ribbons were in the place for such little articles, and her best hat in the place for it, although like several other articles had to be taken out for Sunday-school and church on the following Sunday.

Ellen's trunk was ready also, and as for the dolls' trunks, they had been packed, unpacked and packed again; many changes in the spring weather making changes in what was to be taken for the dollies, and what left.

Leo came that evening, and brought two new and beautiful and strong rocking-chairs, as presents from Grandpa Forester to Ellen and Sophie. He thought they would be very tired sitting so long upon the board seats of the market-wagon during the long ride from Baltimore to Edgermond, so sent the pretty cane-seat chairs.

This was a great surprise and delight, and both girls sent their best love and a kiss to grandpa, and sent word that they were coming the next evening to bid him goodbye.

His errand done, Leo went home; and on his way saw one of his schoolmates, who did not turn to speak to him, which made Leo feel very much slighted and a little angry.

His grandfather, father and mother were at the tea-table when he came in, and he took his place without saying anything.

Mr. Forester asked a blessing, and then his grandfather asked how Ellen and Sophie liked their chairs.

"Oh! please excuse me, grandpa, I almost forgot to tell you about it; they were so pleased with them, and sent their love and a kiss, and are coming to-morrow evening to see us and bid us goodbye."

"So," said the old gentleman to himself, "all is right in that quarter. I wonder what has vexed the boy?"

"I suppose your Aunt Emma invited you to stay to tea, she is always so kind," said Mrs. Forester.

"Yes; she wanted me to stay, and so did Ellen and Sophie, but I knew that our supper would be an hour earlier than their's, and I want to play ball with the boys on the lot."

"So that is not what has vexed him," thought Grandfather Forester. "I wonder what it was."

"I passed Frank Mallory on my way home from Aunt Emma's, and he would not speak," said Leo, as they were rising from the table. "It will be many a day before he gets another chance to slight me; he will have to speak first, and maybe I will not speak to him even then."

"Have you given him any reason for treating you in that way?" asked his mother.

"I beat him in a game of ball last evening, and crowed over him; I suppose that was what miffed him."

Mr. and Mrs. Forester said nothing to this, for they knew that the dear grandfather who shared the good home with them would give suitable advice to their sensitive boy.

"When you have finished your ball-playing, Leo, come to my room, and we will have a little talk," said grandfather, as Leo took his hat to go out.

The boy readily promised, for he always liked to sit in a large arm-chair in his grandfather's room before the wood fire on the hearth. It was so bright and pleasant in there, and he loved to watch the fire-light making shadows on the wall and making a ruddy glow upon the old-time furniture which had been in the For-

ester homestead when his grandfather was a boy.

"I do hope the evenings will stay cool for a good while yet," he said. As his game of ball finished he came to his grandfather's room, and dropped into the chair that was waiting for him. "I will be sorry when it is too warm to have a fire upon the hearth."

"Yes, I too love to sit by an open fire, it reminds me of the times when I was a boy in my father's house; but we must remember that every season is for good in many ways."

"I love to hear you tell of when you were a boy," said Leo, as he looked contentedly about him, and then at the dear grandfather in the chair opposite, "did you always live in the country when you were a boy?"

"Yes, all my boyhood was passed near the village of Edgermond, our farm adjoined that of your Cousin Ellen's Grandfather Elliot."

"Did everybody have fires on the hearth when you were a boy?"

"Yes, for wood was plenty, nearly all farms having a woods, and we generally burned hickory wood, cut from our own woods; but sometimes we had a ross fire, and then we children were glad, because it was a change from other fires, and ross was used for fuel only during the cool evenings of early fall."

“What is ross, grandfather?”

“It is the rough coating from the bark of oak, chestnut and other forest trees, and is of no use except for fuel.”

“Did it make a bright fire?”

“No, it burned with a deep red glow, and was used, I think, more for the purpose of getting it out of the way than for any other reason.”

“But you children loved it?”

“Yes, and many times when sitting by this hearth my thoughts go back to the past, and I think I see the old home, and all the dear ones who gathered about the ross fire.”

“Tell me about them, grandfather, as they looked when you were a boy like me.”

“I will; and first will say, that our home was a large old-time farm house, which had been in my father's family for more than a hundred years. The room we used in the evenings was the picture of comfort, with the gay rag carpet upon the floor, and the old-fashioned carved furniture. A centre-table, with great claw-feet, was in front of the ross fire, and upon it a whale-oil lamp; for in those days coal-oil was a secret which mother earth was hiding in her bosom waiting the time she would see fit to give it out for the use of her children. On one side of the table sat my

father, his black hair silvered by the frosts of time. He read aloud to us from the best of all books—the Bible—or perhaps Milton, Addison, Bunyan, or other heroes who had fought well the battle of life and gone to their reward.”

“Did you love to hear him read?”

“Yes, dear, he was a fine reader, so good that we were not only listeners, but spectators, of the scenes and incidents of his readings. Then upon the other side of the table was our mother, still young and beautiful in the eyes of the group gathered about her. Beside her was the well-filled work-basket, and in her hands one of the little garments always needing a button or string.”

“Did you have a grandfather with you?”

“No, dear, he died before I could remember; but we had one of the dear grandmothers, my mother’s mother, who sat in the large arm-chair near the hearth, knitting in hand, the border of the neat cap shading the fair face and tender blue eyes.”

“Where did you children sit, grandfather?”

“We took our places wherever we thought we could hear and see best—sometimes kneeling in front of the ross fire roasting chestnuts or popping corn. It seems but yesterday,” and Mr. Forester looked into the fire as if trying to see all the dear faces that were in his boyhood’s home.”

"Tell me more about the ross, please, grandfather."

"We children were always glad when father was having trees cut down in our woods, for we knew that the next pleasant thing that would happen would be the coming of a bark-shaver, and we could watch the sharp knife pare off the refuse ross, and we would be allowed to take the smooth pieces of bark from the shaver's hand and pile them up in any way we pleased."

"Did you burn the bark?"

"Oh, no; that was very useful; it was ground into small pieces called 'tan,' and through its help the hides of cows, sheep and calves were made into leather."

"I would like to watch while the tan made hides into leather," said Leo.

"So did we like to watch. The bark-mill and the tannery were owned by two neighbors, and we could go there and see the whole process of making bark into tan. Then we could go to the tannery, and see the deep vats filled with water, in which the tan was soaking until the color for changing the hides into leather was brought out. Then we watched the leather and saw it change its color to that of new mahogany wood, and become firm and strong, and when made into shoes and boots and saddles

and other articles would not let rain water come through it."

"Are any of the people living now who used to sit by the ross fire?"

"No; all this was in the long ago—parents and grandparents have gone to be with their children in the heavenly home. The bark-mill has been torn down, the tannery with its vats is now a fine apple orchard, and the ross fire lives only in memory."

"It will live in my memory, too, grandfather; I do love to hear you tell of old times."

"And I love to hear you tell of new times; but you said this evening that you would not speak to Frank Mallory unless he speaks first, and I felt sorry to hear it."

"Why, grandfather, I never thought of you caring anything about it; why are you sorry?"

"Because to be good is to be happy, and I love to see every one happy and living in peace. It also calls to mind something which happened in my young days when Lester Wellington was my schoolmate, best friend and near neighbor in my country home. We sat at the same desk in school, shared all our treasures with each other, and our first parting was when I went to New York to study law in the office of an old friend of my father.

"As time passed on, several gentlemen in

Baltimore built summer homes for themselves in the neighborhood of Edgermond, among them a merchant named Wilmot, with an only son named Fred.

“Soon Lester’s letters were filled with praises of Fred Wilmot. They had become great friends, and I grew jealous of their friendship, and thought that Lester was giving me up and forgetting me for his new friend, and I was not only sorry but angry.

“One morning in going to our office I met Lester walking arm in arm with a young man whom I had never seen, and I said to myself, that is Fred Wilmot.’

“The old love for Lester sprang up in my heart with the surprise of seeing him, for I had not heard of his coming to New York. I smiled, and was about to grasp his hand, but there was no look of gladness at seeing me, although his handsome brown eyes were resting upon me. He did not appear to know me, and deeply hurt I passed on. Before turning the street corner I looked back and saw that they had stopped and were talking earnestly.

“When I reached the office I was told that two young men had called there, and were much disappointed at not seeing me, as they were on their way to a steamer for a voyage to Europe, and could not wait until I came.

"That evening when I went to my boarding house I found a letter from my mother which should have reached me the evening before. 'My dear son,' she wrote, 'knowing that it would grieve you, I have not written you that Lester's eye-sight has for several months been failing. Now he is entirely blind. To-day he leaves here with his friend Wilmot to visit a noted specialist in Germany. They will remain in New York, over night, and in the morning will call to see you at the office, and bid you farewell.'"

"O grandfather!" said Leo, with tears in his eyes, "how sorry you must have been!"

"I cannot tell you my sorrow and remorse for not having stopped to bid my poor friend farewell. I never saw him again; he died abroad, and young Wilmot returned alone. He told me that as I passed them that day Lester knew my footsteps, and they stopped and called me, but I was beyond hearing, and Lester was much grieved. I tell you all this, Leo, that you may never refuse to speak to a human being, for it might be the very last time you could have the chance. And now goodnight, my dear boy, and may our dear Father in heaven grant you his peace."

"Grandfather," said Leo the next evening, "I told Frank Mallory that I spoke to him yes-

terday when he was looking in a store window, and he said he was thinking what his money would buy for a birthday present for his little sister, and he did not hear me."

"My lesson fell upon good soil," said the kind grandfather to himself, with a satisfied smile.

CHAPTER IV.

OFF TO THE COUNTRY.

“O MAMMA! here is Grandma Elliot’s market wagon! Yes, it is stopping at our house, and the man is looking up at our windows; and oh, mamma! there is a girl in the wagon the size of me, and she has a dollie.”

Ellen had been for some time looking from the window of her mother’s room, which was also the nursery, although her mother had not thought that Mr. Watson would reach the city much before noon. But when she went to the window she was quite as sure as was Ellen that Mr. Watson had come, for she knew her mother’s horses, and knew Mr. Watson, although he had his back to the windows, tying the horses to the iron post.

“Yes, Ellen, he has come,” she said; “run down to the door and invite him and the little girl in.”

Ellen flew off like a bird on the wing and welcomed the travelers.

“This is my little daughter Sally,” said Mr. Watson, putting the hand of the little girl in Ellen’s; “she has never been in Baltimore, and

wanted to come and ride back with you to your grandmother's."

Ellen clasped the little brown hand and kissed the little brown face with hearty goodwill, and just then Mrs. Forester came down and invited them into the parlor, making them feel welcome by her kind and cordial manner. "I hope all are well at the farm, Mr. Watson," she said.

"All entirely well, thank you. Mrs. Elliot sent her love to you all, and also some things from the farm as a present. I will bring them in now if you will please show me where you would like them put."

"Thank you, Mr. Watson. Does mother expect you back this evening?"

"Yes; it is a pretty long trip for the children, but the days are getting long now, and they can get out of the wagon now and then and have a little run about for a change."

"And this is the little Sally that mother often speaks of in her letters?" and Mrs. Forester drew the child to her and kissed her.

"Yes, this is Sally; she could scarcely sleep last night for thinking of the trip, and was up quite early this morning to dress her doll."

"I hope you and Sally are to take dinner with us, Mr. Watson; we are expecting you to stay."

"Thank you; but I have many errands to do in this hour before dinner, but Sally can stay; she has set her heart upon visiting your little girl. I will go down town and have the horses fed at the 'Farmer's Inn,' and give them a few hours rest before we set off for Edgermond."

"Will either of you have some refreshment now?" asked Mrs. Forester; "you have had a long drive; the little girl may need something before our dinner hour—twelve o'clock."

"No, ma'am, thank you; her mother put us up a basket of apple pie, cheese, and other things, and we had plenty of fruit besides, and a jug of new milk. Sally certainly enjoyed the trip."

"I hope she will also enjoy her visit here," said Mrs. Forester, as Mr. Watson arose to go to the wagon.

"Mamma," said Ellen the moment he had left, "may I show Sally my dollies and my play-house, and then take her up to Sophie's?"

"Yes; and you can invite Sophie to take dinner with you if her aunt can spare her, and come by twelve o'clock, as Bridget will have dinner on time."

Catching hands, they darted from the room, and were soon at the play-house, talking about their dolls and doll clothes.

Sally's dolly was home-made, stuffed with

rags instead of sawdust, but was none the less dear to the loving heart of Sally.

Mr. Watson had in the meantime brought from the wagon a large roll of beautiful yellow butter, two fine hams, a box of honey, and a pair of fat chickens ready for the oven. A second and third trip had to be taken to bring a barrel of apples, a sack of potatoes, jars of preserves and apple butter, a cheese, and a large pound-cake, all from the mistress of the fine farm to her loved daughter and her family. Then Mr. Watson drove away, and Mrs. Forester went to the kitchen to speak to Bridget, her youthful maid, about the dinner.

"Mr. Forester will not be at home until two o'clock to-day, Bridget," she said; "I will wait for him, but the children must have their dinner at twelve. We will stew one of these nice chickens, and make plenty of gravy, and with potatoes, lettuce, good bread and butter, and the custards I made this morning, we can have dinner at twelve without hurry."

"That we can, ma'am, and a good one, too," and Bridget set to work to joint the fat young fowl while Mrs. Forester set the table.

"You have put on four places; have you changed your mind about waiting for Mr. Forester?" asked Bridget, whose quick gaze left nothing unseen.

“No, Bridget; but while the children are taking dinner I intend going out to buy a doll for Sally, that she can have as a remembrance of her first visit to Baltimore.”

“And who is to sit in your place at the table?” asked the little maid, with her face bright with some happy thought.

“You can take your dinner with them; it will be too long for you to wait until after two o’clock.”

“True for you,” said Bridget in delight; “and I will kape the best pieces of this big fat chicken for you and the master. Oh! but you are the kind, thoughtful one!”

Before Mrs. Forester dressed to go out she waited to see Ellen with her Matilda and Sally with her Dorcas pass out and down the steps and up the street on their way to see Sophie, for she did not wish to tell them where she was going, nor to put Ellen, who was sure to ask, off with excuses. She arranged the dessert, and then left the field clear to the faithful little maid, who could finish the dinner and serve it well for the children. They—Ellen, Sophie, and Sally—were having a happy time together, and Sally had seen and enjoyed so much since she left home early in the morning that the visit was one she would never forget. Mrs. Endicott had made her very welcome, and be-

fore she left gave her a lot of bright pieces of cashmere, silk and calico, and odds and ends of ribbons and laces. Sally had never been so rich in her life, and when Mrs. Endicott added to her kindness by giving her a little rocking chair, she had no words in which to tell her happiness. The chair was one that Mrs. Endicott had when a child; she had given it to Sophie, but Sophie gladly said it might be given to Sally, now that she had one like Ellen's. Mrs. Watson had put a stool in the wagon for Sally as a change from the board seat, but it was not thought of, now that she had a rocking chair with rosebuds painted on its back and arms.

"Mamma told us to come back at twelve; is it time for us to go?" asked Ellen, when Sally had seen all of Sophie's home from attic to basement.

"It wants only five minutes of it, which will just allow you time to get there," replied Mrs. Endicott.

So, with Sarah in arms, Sophie ran along with the others, and got there just as Bridget was about to bring in the dinner."

"Where's mamma, Bridget?" asked Ellen, as they dashed through the hall and into the dining-room, and from thence to the kitchen.

"She's gone out;" and Bridget smiled in a very knowing manner.

"Oh! Bridget, tell us what she went for; was it something for us?"

"No, indade; it wasn't for *us*;" and Bridget pursed up her lips and smiled with a very mysterious air as she said *us*.

"Then it was for me!" exclaimed Ellen; "yes, I know it was for me."

"No, it wasn't for me," corrected Bridget.

"I do not mean for you, Bridget; of course, it is not for you when you are going to stay at home. Is it for Sophie?"

"No, it is not for Sophie."

"Then it *must* be for Sally. Oh, dear Bridget, do please tell us what it is!"

"No, indade; it wouldn't do for the likes of me to be telling it;" and Bridget whirled around on one foot and "made a cheese" with her stiffly-starched calico dress, much to the admiration of Sally, who had made them many times, but not with such success.

"Yes, it *is* for Sally," commented Ellen; "if I guess lots of things, will you tell me when I come to it, Bridget?"

But the little maid realized that Ellen's first guess might be a doll, so hurried them all in to the table, where the chicken was smoking in its rich gravy; for she had not been idle during

the dialogue, but was running to and fro between the rooms and putting the dinner upon the table in the usual order.

"Who is to wait on the table, now that mamma is out?" asked Ellen.

"I am to be the lady of the house: the mistress said I was to ate my dinner with you." And with an air of pride Bridget took the head of the table, and bowed her head as she had seen Mrs. Forester do when Mr. Forester asked the blessing. Ellen and Sophie, from force of habit, did the same, and little Sally looked on in surprise. It was a jolly meal, and Bridget made her share of the fun. They had just finished their custard when Mrs. Forester's step was heard in the hall. She passed on up to the nursery, and Bridget nodded, as much as to say, "she is gone to put away what she has brought until you have finished dinner."

Ellen's mind was divided between curiosity as to what it was and a dialogue that had just arisen, and as soon as her mother entered she asked for information.

"Mamma, what street will Mr. Watson drive out on; will it be past Sophie's house?"

"No; it will be in an opposite direction."

"Then how will he get Sophie's trunk and chair?"

"He will drive up there and get them and

then turn his wagon around and come down the street and halt here for yours and Sally's."

Ellen and Sophie drew a long breath of satisfaction ; they had not thought that the affair could be so easily arranged.

"But Sophie did not wear her hat down here ; will she wait until the wagon comes and then go home and get it ? "

"She can do as she thinks best about that. Of course, she must go home to bid her aunt and the baby good-bye and to get her hat."

"Then will she stay there and ride down in the wagon ? "

"She can do as she thinks best about that."

"If she gets in the wagon up there, will we walk up there to get in, or will we wait here ? "

Ellen's puzzled face sent Bridget off in a peal of laughter, which shamed her so in the presence of Mrs. Forester that she rushed through the kitchen and out the back door to the porch, where she wiped the tears of mirth from her eyes, and came in looking so demure that it was all that Mrs. Forester could do to keep from laughing, and the question of Ellen was too serious to admit of mirth.

"Now, I will tell you the very nicest way," she said, decidedly. "When Mr. Watson stops at our door you and Sally can walk up with Sophie to get her hat, and bid her aunt and

little cousin good-bye while he is putting your chair and trunk in the wagon. Then he will drive up there and get Sophie's trunk and chair, and you can all ride down here in the wagon, which will halt here for a basket of oranges, lemons, bananas and dates which I have ordered, and will be here in a few minutes, a present to your grandma."

So then Bridget was for once in her life mistaken. Her mother had not gone out to get something for Sally, but a present for Grandma Elliot; and Ellen looked with an air of triumph at Bridget, who was standing in the door that led to the kitchen.

"Now, I wish Sally to go into the hall and bring something here that is wrapped in white paper," said Mrs. Forester with a smile.

Sally was too surprised to move; she stood looking bashfully at the lady.

"Then Ellen and Sophie can go with her and bring another package that is tied up in brown paper."

The three children raced to see who could reach the hall table first. Ellen grasped the white package and put it in Sally's arms, and she and Sophie carried the other.

"You may unwrap yours first, Sally; both packages are for you," said Mrs. Forester kindly.

Surprise and delight shone in the sunburned face of Sally when she took the wrappings from a paper box, took off the lid, and saw a beautiful doll with blue eyes and flaxen hair.

"Is it truly for me?" she whispered; "can I take it in my hands?"

"Yes, it is yours; you can all see it, and then put it in the box to carry home."

They all admired the sweet face and pretty dress of the doll, which was not too fine for every-day use, and then Mrs. Forester asked her to unwrap the brown package. She did so with fingers that trembled with eagerness, and there was a doll's trunk exactly like those of Ellen and Sophie, with her initials S. and a period and W. and a period. It was set in a paper box of little larger in size than the newly-made letters might not be blurred before having time to dry.

Sally having no words in which to express her thanks, stood by with a happy smile upon her lips, and tears of joy in her pretty dark eyes, but Ellen and Sophie made up for her silence.

"Are you glad, Sally?" asked Ellen, to which Sallie nodded "yes," and Sophie said, "You meant 'yes,' didn't you, Sally?" to which question Sally nodded again. She could not trust her voice to speak.

"O mamma!" said Ellen, "we forgot to tell you that Sophie's aunt gave Sally a rocking-chair, and she gave her pretty things to make clothes of for Dorcas, and now she has a trunk to put them in."

Just then they heard Mr. Watson say "whoa" to his horses, and a moment after he came in, followed by a boy from the fruit store with the basket of fruit for Grandma Elliot.

"Will Sophie go now, mamma, and will we go with her?" asked Ellen.

"Yes, you can go;" and away they ran. The boy took his empty basket and went, and Mr. Watson put Ellen's trunk and chair, and the box of fruit and Sally's boxes in on the clean straw spread thickly on the floor of the wagon.

By this time Mr. Forester came, and he and Farmer Watson had a talk in the cool parlor of the people in and about Edgermond, while Mrs. Forester went to the dining-room, and, with the help of Bridget, put up two paper boxes of sandwiches and other things for the supper of the travelers, which, with the fine apples already in the wagon, would keep them from being hungry for the rest of the day.

Then Mr. Watson drove up the street and soon returned with the three little girls and Sophie's possessions, and Sally's package of

samples, and a box of eatables, and, as a crowning act of kindness of Mrs. Endicott and joy for Sally, a set of little dishes. It had been Sophie's, but she gave it freely, and, as a reward for her unselfishness, Mrs. Endicott promised her a new set when she came back from the country, for it was at her request that she gave them to Sally.

They all got out of the wagon without waiting for help, and rushed in to say good-bye, not forgetting Bridget, who shed tears at seeing them go. Then the wagon rolled away, and Mr. and Mrs. Forester returned to the dining-room and the dinner which Bridget had kept hot for them, and the house seemed very still.

"I do feel sorry for Bridget," said Mrs. Forester in a low tone; "she will miss Ellen terribly; the afternoon will be long to her."

"If you can spare her, why not give her a holiday and let her visit her aunt?"

"I will; she has had her dinner and can go now if she wishes," and Mrs. Forester arose and went to the kitchen.

"Bridget," she said, "you did so nicely to-day with the dinner that you may have this afternoon to go out. Is there any place you would like to go?"

"Indade, and there is," said the girl, her eyes bright with happiness; "me cousin is

coming from the ould country this week, and its glad I would be to go to my aunt's to-day and see if she is comed. She is just the age of me."

"You can go right now if you wish, and need not come back until evening. I will get the supper."

"Thank you! thank you!" cried the delighted Bridget, as she flew up to her room to get dressed for the visit.

"It takes very little to make some persons happy," said Mr. Forester, as he helped himself to another one of the fine apples from Mrs. Elliot's farm by way of dessert; "a trifle of money might help to her enjoyment of the holiday."

"Yes; but I think a share of the good things that mother sent would please her better and be of far more use as a gift to her aunt," replied Mrs. Forester; and before Bridget came down she had decided what that share should be—a large slice of the good butter, a square of the honey, a third of the pound cake, a third of the cheese, a can of preserves and one of apple-butter, and all the spare places in the basket filled in with apples. All this was done with the help of Mr. Forester. Then he left for the store, and Mrs. Forester brought little Carl down to dinner, he having just waked

from his long morning sleep. Bridget's delight was freely expressed when she saw the basket, and she hoped the cousin had come, "for it's the illegant supper aunt can have for her this evening," she said between a smile and a tear. Then, with many thanks, she took up the basket and went, and when she came back in the evening she was in the same gleeful state of mind, for the cousin had come, and never enjoyed a supper more; "and it's foine company she'll be for me," added Bridget, and Mrs. Forester was glad for her sake.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE WAGON.

THE travelers were in the meantime enjoying the journey to the country. Farmer Watson was excellent company, willing to help entertain them when called upon, and allowing them to make the whole of the long wagon, except a seat for himself, into as many different places of amusement as they wished.

Sometimes it was a school-room, with hats hanging on the pegs on the side next the door, as Sally informed them was the rule at her school, and the dollies were all there, quiet and obedient. Again it was a garden with plants in the ground and in pots; then again it was a kitchen in which all were busily engaged getting supper, the dollies always on hand.

"Papa, let us get out in the next woods we come to and get real flowers for our garden," said Sally.

"Certainly you may, it will rest you and the horses too;" and it was not long until they came to a brook with woods on either side of

the road, and all declared it was the very spot they were looking for.

"We will let the horses have a good drink, and then I will drive through the brook and stop under the great oak on the other side and help you all out," said Farmer Watson, and they agreed it was the very best plan.

"Why do you let the horses stand in the water when they have drank enough?" asked Ellen.

"Because it cools and refreshes them; see how they seem to love it. But they have stood long enough; come Barney; come Peter, you shall have some grass on the other side," and he chirruped to the gentle creatures, and they obeyed the lightest touch of their kind care-taker's hand, and left the water.

He drove under the shade of the great oak, lifted the children out, and they ran with glad shouts to a great bank of violets which grew in the shade close to the brook which ran through the woods on the right of the road, crossed the road and was lost to sight in the woods on the left.

Happy as they were in the wagon they welcomed the delight of breathing the fragrant air of the cool, moist woods, listening to the song of birds, and seeing bright-eyed squirrels running swiftly over the ground and up the trees.

All was new to Sophie, it was her first visit to the country, and it offered so much of interest that she thought she could never grow weary of it.

"Wouldn't it be nice to eat our supper in a woods," said the practical little Sally.

"Yes," agreed Ellen, eagerly, "let us ask your father if we may," and she ran to the oak tree, under the shade of which he was sitting, and asked, the others following and waiting to hear the answer.

"Yes," he said, "I think it would be a good idea; we will stop at a shady woods a few miles further on, which will make it about five o'clock, a very good time for supper, though, if I am not much mistaken, you little ones have been eating pretty much all the afternoon."

They laughed and ran away, and had a fine game of "Puss wants a corner," and then he called them and said they must be moving on.

They ran and hopped into the wagon without help, and as soon as they were again on the road, made plans for the coming supper.

"We will take out my stool for a table and put my dishes on it," said Sally, "and we will sit around it on the grass, that will be the very nicest way."

"What are you going to do with me?" asked Mr. Watson.

“Why, papa, you can sit at the foot of a tree, and we will carry fresh water to you in my pitcher, and we will drink out of my little cups and let you have the glass.”

“Is water all you are to give me?” he asked, with pretended anxiety.

They all laughed at his look, and Sally said, “you know that you like plenty of cool water, papa; but we will give you all you want of other things.”

Mr. Watson said he was glad that he was to be one of them when it came to the item of supper, and in an hour they came to the woods, and the wagon stopped under the shade of a great oak close by a stream of water. Here the horses were allowed to rest and drink and eat the oats which Mr. Watson had brought in the wagon, and crop the young sweet grass that grew at the edge of the stream.

The girls were in the meantime busily setting out the supper, the empty milk jug, when rinsed, served well to carry water from the stream, and they ate and chatted, and Sally said they were like a party of gypsies that camped in Mr. Elliot's woods the summer before.

By the time they finished the sun was getting low in the west, and its ruby beams lighted the grass and moss and low-growing plants, and made the dark trunks of the trees seem edged with crimson.

"It is lovely! so lovely!" said the beauty-loving Sophie.

"But it won't look this way but a little while," said Sally, "you ought to see a woods on a dark rainy night, if you want to get scared,"

"Were you ever in a woods at night?" asked Ellen.

"Yes, papa and I once got lost in a big woods one dark night; papa was driving a quiet old horse, and he just let him have his own way, and I was so scared that I just hung on to papa's arm and cried until the horse brought us out on the road, then we could see where we were."

"What were you afraid of?" asked Sophie, looking about her.

"I thought the wheels of the carriage might run over a stump and we would upset; and I guess papa was afraid of that too, weren't you, papa?"

"There was danger of it, that is certain, for I had never been in that woods, and took it for a shorter way, instead of keeping to the main road."

As soon as supper was finished the little women packed up the dishes, placed them back in their box, and prepared for moving on.

"If all goes well we will reach the farm in

less than three hours," said Mr. Watson, as he helped them into the wagon.

"Then we will see grandma," cried Ellen, joyously; "oh, won't she be glad!"

"Tell me about her," said Sophie, "does she look like your mother?"

"Oh! she is older than mamma, and uses a dear little white cap, and it has no strings, and she wears gray dresses, and a little white shawl crossed on her breast, so; but she is good and kind like mamma."

"Is the house pretty?" continued Sophie.

"I guess it *is* pretty," said Sally. "It is a great big stone house, with a portico in front, and a large porch back, and both have roses and honeysuckles running up their sides."

"Are there any other flowers, Sally?"

"Yes; there is a big garden back of the house, and all kinds of flowers grow there; and there is an arbor down there with benches in it, and back of it are raspberries and blackberries and currants and gooseberries, and Mrs. Elliot will let you have all you want."

"Will she let you have some too, Sally?"

"Yes, if I want them, but we have plenty at home."

"Where is your house?"

"Just across a field, unless you go around by the road."

"Wouldn't you rather live in the big house?"

"Why, what is the use of that when I can go there as much as I please?" and Sally was much amused that any one would imagine for a moment that she could be dissatisfied with her home.

"What kind of a house is yours, Sally?"

"I will tell you," said Ellen, "it is a pretty white house, not nearly so large as grandma's, but, oh! it is nice and cool, with a great chestnut tree in the front yard, with a swing for Sally and her little sister on one of the great branches."

"Is there a garden?"

"Yes," said Sally, eagerly, "and we have flowers, too, and then there is a great big garden with cabbage and beets, and lots of other things growing in it."

"Don't you have potatoes?" asked Sophie, who was very fond of that vegetable.

"Oh, they grow out in the field, like turnips and melons, the garden is not big enough to hold them all."

"Have you fruit?" asked Ellen, who was very fond of it.

"Yes, plenty of apples, and oh, Ellen, down by the bars that lead into the meadow there is a pear tree with great big, juicy pears, and the tree is always full!"

"Is it full now?" asked Sophie.

"O Sophie!" laughed Sally, "why, it is only in bloom; the pears won't be ripe until—oh! a long time from now."

"Does your papa let you have all the pears you want?"

"Yes; I run down there every morning as soon as I am up and washed and dressed, and pick up the nice ripe pears that fall from the tree in the night."

"Don't you give your papa and mother any; isn't it his tree?"

"I don't know; papa, is it your tree?"

"No; all the fruit and the house and garden belongs to Mrs. Elliot, but we have the use of it."

"Which is just the same," said the contented Sally; "what is the difference so we get all we want?"

"Has your grandmother a swing, Ellen?" asked Sophie.

"Yes, indeed. O Sophie, there is a great willow tree at one end of the house, and under it was my and Sally's play-house last summer; and on one of the great branches there is a swing, grandma had it put up for us, didn't she, Sally?"

The little girl nodded; she was just then eating an apple, her mouth was full and she had been trained not to speak at that time.

"And oh, Sophie, you will like the barn; there are so many places for hens to steal their nests, and it is such fun to find them. Sally and I always looked for the eggs, both at grandma's barn and the one down at Sally's. You can help, too, and we will see who will find the most nests. And grandma lets us feed the chickens, and ducks, and goslings."

Sophie was eager to enter into all these delights, so new to her, but school was the most important of all.

"Can we go to school to-morrow?" she asked.

"Yes, I am going all the time," replied Sally, but papa and mamma said I might stay from there this one day to go to Baltimore, but I must go to-morrow."

"Where is the school-house?"

"It is at the other end of the village from Mrs. Elliot's; about three fields off."

"What is the name of it?"

"Just school-house; I never heard any other name for it."

"But it ought to have a name like the school-houses in Baltimore. There is Number 1, and Number 5, and Number 17, and plenty more. Mamma says ours is Primary."

"Which school are you and Sophie going to?" asked Sally.

"To Number 1, because it is nearest, and mamma knows the teachers, and loves them."

"Is there more than one teacher?"

"Oh, Sophie," laughed Ellen, "she says 'is there more than one teacher' in Number 1."

"But we will go to only one," said Sophie, "and she is the principal."

"Do you know her?" asked Sally.

"Yes, and love her, and aunty says all the teachers are lovely ladies."

"Mamma says it is our duty to like the teachers, but I would like Miss Wood whether it was a duty or not."

"Is she pretty?"

"Yes; she has curly brown hair, and blue eyes, and is fair, and has pretty red cheeks."

"Do you go every day?"

"Yes, every day."

"If it rains?"

"Yes; what do I care for a little rain."

"Do you go past grandma's house?"

"Yes, right past the big gate and the little gate."

"Then you will stop for us, won't you, Sally?"

"Yes, of course I will; that will be nothing to do."

"Do you come home for your dinner?"

"No indeed, it takes too much time; I carry

it in a little basket; and your grandmother will put up dinner for you."

"Where do you put your basket when you get to school?"

"There is a long shelf right over the pegs where the clothes hang, and dinner baskets and buckets are put there."

"Clothes, what kind of clothes?" asked Sophie.

"Why, our hats, and cloaks, or shawls, if it is cool weather."

"Where do you play?"

"Oh, there's lots of places; there is a woods all around the school-house, except just in front, and that is a big yard, and has some tall trees in it. We do have such fun at noon playing games."

"Don't you have recess?"

"Yes, and we play games then, but we can't run so far in the woods as at noon, so play in the yard."

"What girls do you like best at school?" asked Ellen.

"I like them all well enough, but Jennie Wilson and Maggie Howell like me more than the other girls do, so I like them."

"What makes you think they like you better than the other girls do?"

"I 'spect it is because they always run to

meet me when they see me coming. Sometimes I take apples and pears to them."

"Don't you take any to the other girls?"

"No, they have apples at home; I only take to girls who have no apple and pear trees, because they live in a village and have only a house and garden."

After a little time Farmer Watson noticed that the children had stopped talking. The sun had set an hour or more, the roll of wheels and the gentle motion of the wagon had soothed the little travelers to sleep. He spread a blanket over them, and with their dolls in their arms, they slept on until lifted from the wagon at the gate of Grandma Elliot's farmhouse.

CHAPTER VI.

GRANDMA ORGANIZES AN H. H. SOCIETY.

THE next morning it was raining fast, and with the prospect of continuing all day.

Ellen and Sophie were sleeping soundly in the pretty room adjoining that of Mrs. Elliot, where she had placed them the night before in a comfortable bed, too sleepy to know that they had reached their journey's end.

"I will not think of sending them to school for the first time such a day as this," said Mrs. Elliot to Hulda, the middle-aged woman who lived with her, "but will let them sleep as long as they will."

"Yes, it will shorten their day," replied Hulda, "we may expect them to get homesick."

"I have no dread of that with Ellen, for she is a happy little creature and loves the country; at the same time she has never been here without her mother until now. I have no idea how the rainy day will affect Sophie."

"But she has no mother to grieve after."

"No, Mrs. Endicott is her aunt, but she has cared for her as tenderly as a mother. It will, I fear, seem very dull to the child until she

gets acquainted with us and the children at school."

"Sally will go to school to-day no matter how it rains, and will stop to see if the children are going."

"If she does, Hulda, ask her to stop on her way back to take tea with the children; and if you see Mr. Watson this morning tell him that she will stay, that they may not be anxious."

"I will watch for him, but if I don't see him, Sally can run home and tell them she is invited to tea."

"Yes, I do not think she will mind the little walk back."

"Not when there are two playmates at the end of it."

The breakfast was scarcely finished when there was a gentle tap at the door, and Sally, with dripping shawl and umbrella stood without.

"I am glad to see you, Sally," said Mrs. Elliot, "but the children are not awake yet, and will not go to school to-day. You can stop on your way back, and if we see your father, will ask if you can stay to tea."

"I told mamma I was going to stop, going and coming," said Sally, joyously, "and I asked her if I might stay if you invited me, and she said I might."

"Then that is settled, and I will tell the children to expect you."

Sally went on her way cheerily, and Hulda had all her morning's work finished before the children made their appearance, washed and dressed, and their hair plaited neatly, they having helped each other, and very proud of having accomplished it without the aid of older persons; they felt that they were really visiting on their own basis.

"Will we go to school, grandma?" asked Ellen; "see, we are all ready."

"No, dear, it is too wet, besides, it is too late; Sally was here an hour ago on her way to school."

"Oh, was she? And we did not see her," and the children looked disappointed.

"But she is to stop on her way back, and will take tea with us."

"Oh, grandma, that is splendid," said Ellen, clapping her hands with delight. "Sophie, we will have a play-house ready by the time she comes," and the two clasped arms and whirled around the room in their joy.

"Must we stay from school every time it rains, grandma?" asked Ellen, when she recovered her breath.

"No, Mr. Watson cannot work much on rainy days, and he can put one of the horses to

the light wagon and take Sally and you two children."

There was another whirl around the room upon hearing this, and by this time Hulda had a good little breakfast for them.

"Oh, Hulda, do please let us eat off the table with claw-feet, that grandma gave me last summer, won't you?"

"Yes, I don't care, if Mrs. Elliot is willing."

"May we, grandma?"

"Certainly, and here is a table-cloth," and she took a square linen cloth from the side-board drawer and gave to them.

Hulda gave them the smallest plates, cups, and saucers and cutlery that could be collected on short notice, and they sat down to the meal as happy as it was possible to be.

Hulda baked very small corn meal pan-cakes for them, and gave them a little dish of butter, and another of honey, and poached eggs, and was gratified to see that her effort to please them was a success.

"Now you can take the dishes out to Hulda," said Mrs. Elliot, when they finished breakfast, "she is making bread, and we must not stop her."

The girls were quick to obey; the table was cleared quickly, the cloth folded, the little table put to its place; then they went to see

Hulda putting the dough in the pans ready for baking.

"Oh, Hulda, do please let us have a little loaf for ourselves," said Ellen.

"Of course you may," said the kind woman, and getting two little tin plates, she gave them each a lump of dough. "But you must first wash your hands," she said.

"But we did," said Sophie, in surprise; "we washed them with soap before we came down stairs."

"Yes, but we are going to make bread, and the first rule is, wash your hands."

The children laughed and ran to the sink, washed and dried their hands, and were ready for work.

"Here is a piece of dough for a loaf for Sally, and a tin plate to bake it on," said Hulda.

"Oh, yes, Sally must have bread, and oh, Hulda, will you let us eat at our little table this dinner-time?"

"I think it would be more polite to eat with your grandma; you see you were not up in time to eat with her this morning. But when you *play* dinner or supper, then you can have your little table."

The children saw the wisdom of this, and what with getting a play-house ready in a cor-

ner of the large dining-room, and watching the baking of their three loaves, they felt they would have a busy day.

"I should think you would like to have a little pie apiece for your dinners," said Hulda, "you may have dough for crust, and chopped apples."

"Will we, Sophie?" asked Ellen, eagerly.

"Yes, and let us make one for Sally."

"Here are three little patty-pans," said Hulda, taking them from the cupboard, "it would be a good idea for you to make them to take to school to-morrow for your dinners. You can give Sally her's this evening."

The children thought it an excellent idea, and as Hulda wished to use the rolling-pin, she gave them empty catsup bottles to roll their crusts with, and they were quite satisfied.

"Must we grease the dishes for the pies as we did for the loaves of bread?" asked Sophie.

"No, it is a poor pie that won't grease its own dish—always remember that."

Thus the short morning was happily spent, the play-house was ready for the coming of Sally, Hulda had baked the bread and pies in a perfect manner, and they had enjoyed a good dinner prepared by the same careful hand.

"I am going up to my room now," said Mrs. Elliot, "would you like to go with me?"

"Yes, grandma, and will you let us look in your little boxes in the bureau?"

"Yes, certainly; it will be something for you to do this rainy day."

They ran up the stairs, and when they came to her room, waited until she came and opened the lower drawer for them. Ellen had not seen the things in it for a year, and Sophie had never seen them, and Mrs. Elliot enjoyed their chatter as they looked over the contents of each box.

"Here is the box that holds my chain," said Ellen, taking up one in the shape of a star and covered with tiny shells, "and here is my chain," and she held up a fine gold chain of a single strand and small clasp; "grandma, please tell Sophie about it."

"That little chain is more than a hundred years old, Sophie," said Mrs. Elliot. "It belonged to my great grandmother, and my great grandfather clasped it about her neck the morning he bade her farewell to go to battle in the war of the Revolution. She gave it to me and I gave it to Ellen, who is my namesake, but will keep it until she is old enough to take care of it."

"These buttons were on the coat her grandfather wore when he went into battle," said Ellen, taking them in her hand.

"Yes, they are for your baby brother, I am keeping them for him."

"But, grandma, what are these dear little cards for, I never saw them before?" asked Ellen, taking four small squares of pink-tinted ivory, with pink silk cord attached, and the letters C. E. engraved upon them.

"Your Aunt Lizzie belongs to a Christian Endeavor Society which meets in the church in the village, and these little cards were given to those who became members."

"Could little girls like Sophie and me belong to it?" asked Ellen, eagerly.

"There are societies for little people, but there has not, as yet, been one organized in Edgermond."

"I wish Sophie and I could belong; tell us all about it, grandma, please."

Mrs. Elliot took the C. E. pledge from the drawer and explained the meaning of the sentences upon it.

"You could have a little society of your own, and we could give it the name of 'The Helping Hand.' I have pieces of ivory from which I will cut little cards and print H. H. upon them, and upon the backs I will write a little pledge."

"Oh, that will be splendid; can Sally join, too?"

"Yes, we will make a card for Sally."

"For Cousin Leo, too; can boys belong to The Helping Hand Society?"

"Yes, as many as are willing to become members."

"What will you write on the back of the cards, grandma?"

"A pledge which I think will not be too difficult for little people like you to keep. I think these words: 'I promise to try to be helpful to everybody, and do all the good I can every day.' Will you agree to this?"

"Yes, I will; will you, Sophie?"

Sophie nodded yes, she was quite as much pleased as was Ellen. To belong to a society made them feel of account in the world.

"Oh, grandma, when you write our pledges and Sally's, please write Cousin Leo's, and let me send it to him in a letter?" said Ellen.

"I will, indeed, and will write them as soon as Sally comes and we explain to her what we are intending. There she is now; I hear her footsteps on the porch, and, of course, she is very wet in this heavy rain. You have a chance now to do good, help Sally to be dry and comfortable."

The children sprang up, ran down stairs to welcome Sally, helped remove her wet wrappings, and took them to the kitchen where

Hulda placed them about the glowing stove. Then Sophie ran to her trunk for a pair of dry stockings, and Ellen for a dress and shoes, and in a few minutes Sally almost forgot that she had been wet.

"Come up to grandma's room, Sally, we have something to tell you," and joining hands they sped up the steps.

As they had thought, Sally was delighted to become a member of the Junior H. H., and the three proudly accepted the cards upon which Mrs. Elliot had neatly written the sentence, "I promise to try to be helpful to everybody, and do all the good I can every day."

"When will we send Cousin Leo's pledge to him, grandma?" said Ellen.

"I am intending to write to his mother on Monday, and we can put in a letter for him with the card in it."

The next morning was clear and beautiful, and the three happy little girls went to the school-house in the woods, where Miss Woods, the teacher, received them kindly.

Sally's friends, Jennie and Maggie, soon became Ellen's and Sophie's, and they planned to eat their dinners together in the woods at noon, then the bell rang, and all ran into school.

"Children, the rain of yesterday has made the woods very damp," said Miss Wood, when

the clock struck twelve, "I do not wish you to play there this noon, but in the yard and school-house."

Sally saw the look of disappointment in the faces of Ellen and Sophie, and the moment they were dismissed, she, remembering her pledge, hurried to tell them that they would have a good time playing, for they could make as much noise as they pleased in the school-room on days that they could not go to the woods; and they found that she was right.

They played "hide and seek," and "puss wants a corner," and the teacher ate her luncheon at the desk and read undisturbed by the noise.

It was surprising how quickly Ellen and Sophie got acquainted with the others, and felt at home with them; so much so that Ellen told Jennie Wilson, Maggie Howell, and several others, of her gold chain, and all that her grandma had told her of it.

"Bring it to school to-morrow and let us see it," said Jennie, and the others united in the request.

"I will," replied Ellen, glad to gratify those who had made her so welcome among them.

"Grandma," she said, as soon as she reached the farmhouse that evening, "may I take my chain to-morrow to show to the girls?"

"The clasp is not strong, dear; I am afraid it would come loose, and the chain would drop from your neck."

"But I will carry it my hand, grandma; I need not put it on my neck."

"There would be more risk losing it that way than by wearing it."

"But, grandma, I promised; what will the girls think of me if I don't keep my word?" and tears came into Ellen's eyes.

"You may wear it, dear, I will clasp it on your neck, but I must add that you should not have promised without asking me if I were willing for you to wear it."

"But, grandma, you gave it to me, I thought I could wear it at any time I chose."

"I am not surprised that you thought so, but I will say it now, that as you promised you may wear it to-morrow, and then not again until you are older, and know how to take care of it, and before that time I will have the clasp strengthened," and with this the little girl was satisfied.

"Now, my little Ellen," said Mrs. Elliot the next morning as she clasped the chain about the plump neck, "I think there will be no danger of losing it if you don't unclasp it, so I ask you not to take it off until you come home from school this evening."

It was a very proud little girl that reached the play-ground that morning, and Sally was equally proud to be in the company of such a pretty and noted piece of jewelry.

"Oh, Sally, what do you think!" cried one of the girls, joyously, as all who were in the play-ground ran to meet the three; Miss Wood says if we study real well she will take us at two o'clock upon a walk to the Chrome quarries."

This was such charming news that Ellen forgot her chain, but Jennie did not, especially as she saw it glistening upon Ellen's neck, and all clustered about her to admire it.

"It is such a sweet little chain," said Maggie, "do take it off, Ellen, and let us see it in our hands."

"No, the clasp is not strong, and grandma told me not to take it off."

"I guess she knows it is plated," remarked Sarah Parsons, "that is the reason she will not let us have the chance to look at it."

"No it is not," said Sally, "it was made in the 'Lutionary War."

Little Sally was not versed on the subject, but her love and loyalty to her friend prompted her to give all the help she could.

"Even if it is not plated," said Sarah, scornfully, "it is so light that there is not much

gold in it; but I saw one exactly like it, and it was plated."

This was too much for Ellen; she forgot her grandmother's request, but unclasped the chain and laid it in Sarah's hand. She looked at it closely; it was passed from one to another, then the bell rang for school, one of the girls clasped the chain quickly about Ellen's neck, and all ran in.

Recess came, and all ran to the play-ground, and were soon deeply interested in games which required much running. The time passed all too quickly, and when the ten minutes were out, and they were back in the school-room Sarah made a discovery.

"Where is your chain?" she asked, "it is not on your neck."

Ellen put her hand to her head, found it was gone, and burst into tears. Sarah was not at all sorry, nor did she offer to help search for it. The others would have done all they could, but recess was over, and they had to take up their lessons.

"Why are you crying, Ellen?" asked the teacher, kindly.

"I have lost the neck-chain that grandma gave me."

Miss Wood kindly allowed two of the girls to go with her to the yard to search for it, but

could not find it. They all helped search at noon, except Sarah, but the chain was not found; and when two o'clock came Ellen felt that she could not go to the Chrome quarries, she must go home and tell her grandma.

Mrs. Elliot was very sorry, but she saw that Ellen was deeply distressed, and did not add to her grief; at the same time she saw a lesson in it for the little girl which she thought should not be overlooked.

"It all came from your disobedience, my child," she said earnestly; "disobedience was the very first sin that was committed upon this earth; it was followed by evil consequences to the whole human race, and disobedience to parents brings trouble to all children."

"Who was the first person that was disobedient grandma?" asked Ellen, looking up through her tears.

"It was Eve, in the Garden of Eden, where our kind Father in heaven had placed her and Adam—our first parents. He gave them that beautiful home, with all the fruit they could desire, and asked of them not to eat the fruit of but one tree; but Eve disobeyed, she ate of the fruit and gave it to Adam."

"Did our Father in heaven punish them, grandma?"

"Yes, he turned them from the garden for

their disobedience; punishment of some kind always follows disobedience."

Ellen's tears flowed again at remembrance of the lost chain, and Mrs. Elliot tried to comfort her with the hope of finding it the next day.

The children in the meantime had a charming visit to the Chrome quarries, where they saw the whole process of getting the ore from the earth, and heard from Miss Wood its many uses, gathered by her from encyclopedias and other sources. She read to them that it is the material from which chromic acid is made, and that chromic acid makes a beautiful green color, used in printing bank notes, in staining glass, painting porcelain, and for many other purposes, and mixed with other compounds, makes many beautiful colors used in printing calicoes.

All this was deeply interesting to the children, and no one would have enjoyed it more than Ellen, who passed an unhappy afternoon because of the lost chain.

The next day and the next, search was kept up at every play-time, but without result, Sarah Parsons being the only one who made no effort to find it.

"If she belonged to our Helping Hand Society she would help me to look for it," said Ellen to Sophie one night before going to sleep.

"Yes, she would," responded Sophie.

CHAPTER VII.

SEVERAL YOUNG HEROES.

LEO had, as a rule, passed at least two evenings at his Uncle Forester's each week, playing games with Ellen and Sophie until his early bed-time, and he missed them very much, now that they were out in the country. His grandfather, knowing this, sat in his room those evenings and told him of times when he was a boy, and Leo would tell him of his teachers and his studies, particularly his Sunday-school teacher, Miss Ashton. One evening he had quite an incident to relate of her, which interested his grandfather very much. He had been to her home to take her a message, and, while he was on the door-step talking to her, a boy, who was a stranger to both of them, stopped and asked her if she was Miss Ashton. She replied that it was her name, and the boy said: "They want you down at the station-house; somebody is hurt."

"Is it my father or brother?" Miss Ashton asked, turning very pale.

"I don't know if it is your brother; it is a boy about the size of me."

"Who is he, and how is he hurt?"

"I don't know his name; he can't talk: he was run over by a bicycle."

"Then who sent you for me, and why?"

"The police sent me; they found your name in his pocket."

The boy had told all he knew, and ran back to the station-house.

"I wish you would go with me, Leo," said Miss Ashton, turning to him; "are you sure that your mother would be willing to have you go?"

"Yes, I am sure of it; she would want me to go if she knew you asked me."

"You will do me a great favor, and I shall be much obliged."

They hurried away, and soon reached the station-house, only three squares away, and were taken to the settee upon which lay the injured boy.

"It is Elmer Ware, one of my Sunday-school pupils. Have you sent for a physician?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss," replied one of the policemen; "we telephoned; he will be here very soon."

He had scarcely spoken when the doctor came, lifted his hat to Miss Ashton, and nodded to the policemen standing about. "He is only stunned," he said, cheerfully, after making an

examination of the insensible boy; "he will be all right in a little while." He gave Elmer something to revive him, and in a few minutes he opened his eyes, his first glance resting upon Miss Ashton.

"I know the words you gave our class last Sunday, teacher," he said; "grandmother heard me say them; I will say them now—may I?"

"Yes, say them, my boy," answered the doctor heartily; "let us hear them."

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and the answer is, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'

"Yes, you have remembered the words well," said Miss Ashton, gently. "Is he able to go to his home, doctor? I will go with him."

"Yes, if he can ride."

"We will go in the car; it passes his grandmother's door. Come, Elmer."

The boy was quick to obey, and they left the station-house and Leo went home.

"Queer words to hear here, the words that little fellow had so pat; yet somehow they make me feel good," said one policeman to another.

"What words?"

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' and the answer to it, 'Believe on the Lord

Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.' It just seems that the words were for me."

It was not Miss Ashton's first visit to Elmer's home, nor was she a stranger to the gentle old lady who welcomed her.

"I am so grateful to you for coming with him, and so thankful that he was not badly hurt," she said, as she kissed Elmer's forehead.

"It is always a pleasure for me to come here," said Miss Ashton, and, after a few minutes' conversation, she bade them good-bye and went home.

The next Sunday Leo and Frank Mallory were in their places in Sunday-school in time to have a little talk before the hour of opening.

"I don't see why the superintendent put that Elmer Ware in our class," said Frank: "he is not in our grade in the public school."

"What is your objection to him?" asked Miss Ashton, who, coming in at that moment, heard the remark.

"He is so dull," said Frank, rather ashamed, for he had not wished her to hear it; he has no fun in him, and will not get angry no matter how much you plague him."

"Why do you wish to make him angry? I am sure he does nothing to annoy you; he is pleasant and well-bred, neat in dress, and studies well, or he could not be in a higher

grade in school than yourself. Is it Christlike to treat any one so? Is it doing as you would be done by? He does not deserve such treatment. Shall I tell you one of his unselfish acts?"

Frank did not give a very hearty response, but Miss Ashton continued: "My cousin is the teacher in Elmer Ware's class in public school, and has great regard for him. She told me last evening that the boy who sits next to him is a poor writer, and by accident spoiled his pen, and was too timid to ask for another. To help him Elmer Ware exchanged pens with him, and was blamed for his poor writing. It was not until school was dismissed that the teacher heard from the other boy the cause of Elmer's failure to write as well as usual."

Just then Elmer and others of the class came in, the bell rang, and the exercises began.

"Boys," said Miss Ashton to Leo and Frank, when the hour was out, "will you make a call with me to-morrow evening?"

They agreed willingly, and asked what time they were to go.

"I will call at your school for you, as the place we are to go is in an opposite direction from my home. Tell your parents about it that they may not be anxious about you."

They promised, and the next evening Miss

Ashton was promptly on hand. They walked several squares, and came to the house where Elmer Ware lived with his grandmother, and Miss Ashton rang the bell.

The boys were pleased with the sweet-faced old lady, to whom Miss Ashton introduced them as schoolmates of Elmer.

"I am sorry my grandson is not in," she said, as she led the way to the beautifully neat and comfortable sitting-room, and invited them to take seats; "he is out selling his evening papers; he goes from school to the office for them."

"He still sells papers, does he?" said Miss Ashton.

"Oh, yes, the dear boy does everything he can to help me. Since his parents' death he seems to think that he must take care of me and his little sister. I am sorry it is so; I love to see young people enjoy life, and be as free from care as possible."

"And the other trial, does he seem to get used to it or to outgrow it?" and Miss Ashton glanced at a pretty little girl of about three years of age, who was playing with her doll in one corner of the room.

"No, and I fear he never will;" and the grandmother's eyes grew dim with tears.

"Do you object to telling these boys of Elmer's trial?" asked the teacher.

"No ; but I hope they will not mention it to Elmer, or let him know in any way that they know it."

"No, we never will," said both boys earnestly.

"Elmer is a very affectionate and dutiful boy," said the grandmother ; "and his love for his parents and obedience to them was beautiful. His heart was filled with happiness when this little sister came, and when allowed to hold her in his arms he was prouder than a king. When she commenced to walk he asked his mother one day to allow him to take her out on the street, and was leading her gently along when several dogs got to fighting near them. He took her up in his arms and ran, but stumbled and fell, and since then little Sylvia's right arm has hung helpless. It was nearly two years ago, and the doctors give us no hope that she will ever have the use of it."

"No one blamed him, I am sure," said Miss Ashton.

"No ; it would have been cruel, when the dear boy had done all he could to protect his little sister ; but I fear he will always grieve because of the accident. Every penny that he can spare goes to provide pleasures or comforts for her, and his aim in life is to secure a good education that he may help her to the same,

and to provide her with every other advantage possible."

Miss Ashton saw that Leo and Frank were deeply interested. They now looked upon Elmer as a hero, and Frank was ashamed that he had spoken unjustly of him. She had no fear but he would treat Elmer well the next time they met.

Leo had another chapter to add to his story of Miss Ashton and Elmer when he got home, and his parents and grandfather were much interested.

"It speaks well for the boy that a Christian lady like Miss Ashton appreciates him," said Grandfather Forester.

"It is just such boys as Elmer Ware that we would like you to choose as friends," added Mrs. Forester; "and now, Leo, we have a pleasant surprise for you."¹

"What is it?" he asked, eagerly.

"A letter for you from your Cousin Ellen."

"But Cousin Ellen cannot write."

"Her grandmother wrote it for her; it is in one from Mrs. Elliot to me."

"Where is it, mother?"

"Up in your grandfather's room. We read mine; then grandfather said he would take it to his room for you to read; and Leo, you

have an invitation to pass all your vacation at Grandma Elliot's farmhouse."

This was such joyful news that, in order to fully express his delight, he clapped his hands against his sides and crowed, at which they all laughed until tears of mirth stood in their eyes.

"But how am I to get there, mother?" he asked; "is Farmer Watson coming to Baltimore in his wagon?"

"No, but a client of your grandfather's, who lives at Edgermond, is coming to see him on some law business, and is to take you with him in his carriage."

Leo ran up-stairs to his grandfather's room, and was poring over the letter when his grandfather came in. "I am to go next Thursday, grandfather, the very day after school closes," he said, with beaming eyes.

"Very good. You should write to your Cousin Ellen this evening, and tell her to thank your grandmother for the kind invitation, and tell her you are glad to accept it."

"Will you help me with the letter, grandfather?"

"Certainly; here is paper, pen and ink; you can write now."

Leo set to work cheerily, his grandfather helping him to word it correctly, and when finished advised him to show it to his mother, as

she might wish to send a message in it to Mrs. Elliot. Leo obeyed, and Mrs. Forester said it was a very good letter indeed. She asked him to give her love in it to Ellen and Sophie, and her thanks to Mrs. Elliot for her great kindness, and also her love. Leo ran back to his grandfather's room to add all she told him, then put his letter in the envelope, put Ellen's address upon it, sealed and stamped it, ran down and out, and dropped it into the nearest letter-box, and he was thus far on his journey to the country.

"Your father and I are going over to your Uncle Forester's after tea," said his mother when he came back; "you must be company for your grandfather while we are out."

"Yes; grandfather said if I would study my lessons for to-morrow and know them well, he would tell me about his great-grandfather, who was killed by the Indians. I am going to study them now."

The lessons were pretty hard for a boy not yet eleven years old, but he said them aloud on the book and off the book, and by the time supper was ready he knew them perfectly.

"Run up and ask your grandfather if he is coming down to the library," said Mrs. Forester, when, tea finished, they were about to go out; "if he is, I will light the lamp before we go."

Leo was quick to obey, and hoped his grandfather would choose to stay in his own room.

"Where would you rather be this evening, grandfather?" he asked; "will mother light the library lamp?"

"Where would you rather be?" asked Mr. Forester.

"Oh, let us stay here in your room; stories always sound better here."

"We will; you can go down and tell your mother we will not need the lamp."

"You tell me that you were reading in school of the early settlers of our country and of Indians," said Mr. Forester, when he returned and took one of the large arm-chairs, "and it brought to mind that I had never told you of my great grandfather who was the last white man killed by the Indians in that part of Kentucky in which he settled, the red men having nearly all been driven away. He and his wife had gone on horseback to visit a neighbor more than a mile distant, and when coming home in the evening were so suddenly attacked by three Indians that he was unable to battle with them."

"Couldn't she help him any, grandfather?"

"No, except by riding back to the neighbor's cabin, and telling the family of the attack. He and his two grown sons hurried to the spot, but the Indians were gone, and my great grand-

father lay dead. They had taken his rifle and powder and shot, and no doubt left as quickly as possible, fearing an attack."

"Did your great grandmother live in the same place after that?"


"Yes; at first she thought she could not, but her two sons could cultivate the ground, could hunt squirrels and catch rabbits and fish for food, and she did not know what better to do. They raised what sheep and other domestic animals they could save from wild beasts by building high fences to protect them at night. O my dear boy! the early settlers of your beautiful and beloved country had many trials and hardships."

"Were there any wolves there, grandfather?"

"Yes, and panthers. One time the boys killed a lamb, and the mother wished to send a quarter of it to her good neighbor. She put the two younger children upon a quiet old horse, and, with the meat in a sack in front of them, they set out.

"In going through the woods, something sprang down from the limb of a tree and dragged the sack to the ground, and carried it off.

"The children, though sorry for the loss of the meat, were not frightened, for they thought it was a dog, but put the old horse to a gallop, and soon were at the cabin of their neighbor and told their story."



"It is a panther!" the father and sons said, in a breath, and with rifles in hand they went to the place, and soon returned with the dead panther, rejoicing over the escape of the children."

"Did they have any other escapes, grandfather?" asked Leo, after some time spent in thought over the story of the panther.

"Yes, dear, and my grandfather used to say that their dangers and escapes made God seem very near to them, proving that he was caring for them, and they had Christian faith in his word that he would be a father to the fatherless."

"Tell me some more that your grandfather told you, please."

"Yes, I will tell you of the narrow escape from death of his eldest sister. The daughter of their neighbor, a young girl near her own age, came to pass the night with her. The two girls slept in a small room on the lower floor, while the mother and the two younger children had one of the rooms overhead, and the two older boys the other, one of whom was my grandfather. It was summer, and the one window of the girl's room was open, it being so close to a small building used as a weaving-room that it could not be seen from the outside of the cabin; and although the girls had never

before slept there they had no thought of danger.

"Past midnight the daughter of the house was awakened by hearing the low cry and the stealthy step of a panther, which had scented prey, but could not find it. Round and round the cabin and weaving-room he crept, while she kept perfectly still, knowing that the least stir that still night would be heard by his quick ear. At length, when her fright became almost past bearing in silence, she heard the sharp crack of a rifle, followed by the glad shouts of her brothers. They, too, had been listening, and having waited for a good chance had sent a bullet with such sure aim that the panther lay dead upon the grass in front of the cabin."

"But did they never have any fun, grandfather; was there always danger in living there?"

"There is always danger, my boy, where there are wild animals, but the early settlers had their pleasures, and I will tell you of one which my grandfather told me. Once while out hunting, the boys killed a mother bear, and brought home a baby bear as playmate for a puppy, a little larger, but not any stronger than the little bear.

"The young people had much fun watching the antics of these two jolly animals, which soon

grew expert at wrestling, and the bear was far the more cunning of the two. If he found that he was going to win the battle he staid in earnest until the dog was whipped; but if the dog seemed likely to win, the bear would turn the combat into play.

“As the bear grew older he began to show his savage nature. He grew sullen at times, and would not eat and drink, and more than once growled and showed his teeth to those who were so kind to him.

“At length one day he drove the family from the cabin, and walked to and fro before the door, giving low growls. He had grown to full size before they realized that he was a wild animal that could kill them all if he willed to do so. They had fondled him so long as a pet that they never thought of fearing him as an enemy.

“All the long summer afternoon he kept them out of the cabin; but at length, to their relief, they heard the two older brothers coming home with their rifles upon their shoulders, and called to them. The boys saw the danger of coming near him while he was in such savage temper, so went quietly to the back of the cabin, went into the narrow passage between it and the weaving-room, crept through the window and up the ladder into the room which overlooked

the yard in front of the cabin, and in a few seconds the pet they had loved shared the fate of the panther.

“And now good night, dear Leo, and in your prayer thank our heavenly Father that you can sleep without fearing an attack from Indians or wild animals.”

Leo left the room, and was about to go to bed, when he heard his father and mother come in, and went down to meet them.

“Your aunt had a letter from Ellen to-day, Leo, and in it was this for you,” and she handed him the “Helping Hand card.”

“Why didn’t Cousin Ellen put it in her letter to me?” asked Leo, looking upon it in pleased surprise.

“She wished her mother to see it, and says that she and Sophie and Sally have each one like it, and are trying to live up to the pledge, and believe that you will try also. Here is Ellen’s letter.”

Leo read it carefully, looking from time to time at the card, and when he finished he said to himself, “If I had been with grandfather’s grandfather I would have helped him kill that bear.”

CHAPTER VIII.

LEO IN THE COUNTRY.

THE next Thursday evening found Leo at Mrs. Elliot's farmhouse, where he was gladly welcomed, Ellen and Sophie being allowed to stay up an hour beyond their bedtime to see him. The next morning he was up early, feeling it to be a waste of time to be in bed when the birds were singing, and the fowls and every creature on the farm was awake and making itself heard. It was not his first visit, and he knew the farm and farmhouse as well as he did his own home, and loved Mrs. Elliot as well as if she had been his own grandmother as well as of his Cousin Ellen.

"We are so glad you have come, Leo," said Ellen when he came into breakfast. "Sally's cousin, Charlie Medford, is visiting at Mr. Watson's, and has his dog Dash, and Sally says he was wishing every day that you would come."

"Who was wishing, Charlie or Dash?"

"Why, Charlie; and oh, Leo, you will have splendid times in grandma's woods; there are lots of good things to find there—blackberries

and huckleberries, and it is such fun to sail little boats on the creek that runs through it."

Leo did not wait for a call from Charlie. He went that day to Farmer Watson's, saw Charlie and Dash, and the two boys agreed to pass the next day in the woods.

"We won't come back till evening," said Charlie in glee; "but will make boats to sail on the creek."

"Then we must take something to eat," replied Leo; "I know that grandma will give us one of the good potato custards like the one Hulda made for dinner, and you must take Dash."

In his haste Leo's speech was something like his Cousin Ellen's upon the same subject, but Charlie understood, and promised that Dash should be one of the party.

Dash was a good-natured, frolicsome dog, full of tricks as a monkey, always scaring up birds or rabbits or something, and never catching anything, Charlie believing that he was too tender-hearted.

As soon as breakfast was over the next morning Leo, with the custard in his basket, knocked at Farmer Watson's door; but alas! Charlie had a sore throat, and Mrs. Watson said it would not be safe for him to go in the woods and about the creek until he was well.

"But you may take Dash," said Charlie ;
"he is the best company any one can have."

Leo was very sorry that Charlie could not go. He stayed some time with him, told him about his home, his parents and his grandfather, and some of the interesting stories he had told him, and Charlie enjoyed the visit. Then Leo whistled to Dash, who bounded ahead, and they soon came to the creek.

Oh, the delight it was to the city boy to breathe the fresh air of the woods, to see wild flowers, and hear the birds sing. He thought he would never grow tired of being there. Berries grew along the shore of the creek, and he said to himself that after he had eaten the custard he would fill the basket with the largest and ripest blackberries and take them to Grandma Elliot.

Boughs of large oak trees reached over the creek, and Leo saw a place on one of them where he could sit and look down upon the water, which was quite deep and swift in that spot. The branches were so low that he saw it would be no trouble to climb to it, but first he would sit at the foot of it and look at a picture book he had brought in the basket. He amused himself with this and throwing sticks in the water for Dash to bring out before they floated down the stream. Then Dash was

allowed to rest and dry his glossy coat on the bank, while Leo read some of the little stories which told about the pictures. By the time he finished reading he was hungry, so thought he would eat his custard. Dash had been taking a sleep after his many baths, but was up in an instant, and stood watching every bite the boy took, wagging his tail and giving little barks, which seemed to say, "Oh, Leo! do give me some custard."

"Oh, no, Dash," said Leo, with his mouth full; "grandma's custards were not made for dogs; I want every bite myself."

Dash could not understand a word, but the tone sounded cheery, so he gave a joyous little bark and wagged his tail faster than ever. This amused Leo and he broke off a piece of the rich crust and offered it, but just as Dash reached for it he drew it back, thus adding meanness to his selfishness. The custard finished, he climbed the oak tree, and sitting upon the limb, looked down upon the water, while Dash, not being able to follow, gazed up with sad look.

"Here is something for you, Dash," said Leo, as he broke off a stout stick from a dead branch and threw it into the water.

Dash sprang in after it, and in his eagerness to see the sport, Leo leaned too far forward,

lost his footing, and fell into the creek. He could not swim, so went down, but soon came up, and Dash having caught the stick, swam to the spot; Leo grasped the stick, and was towed ashore. He lay on the grassy bank for some time, too frightened to move, and Dash lay panting beside him; then he arose, took his basket, and went home, leaving Dash at Mr. Watson's.

"Oh, grandma," he said that night, as she sat by his bedside, "I did not give Dash a crumb of my custard, and he wanted it so much, but he forgave me and saved my life. He ought to be a member of the Helping Hand Society instead of me, because he did all the good he could, and I forgot my pledge. I will never treat an animal so meanly again if I live to be a hundred."

"No, dear; God gave these dumb, helpless creatures into our care, and we should treat them kindly if for no other reason than that He made them. Every little mistake like this will call your pledge to your memory, and in time it will keep you from many evils."

Then Mrs. Elliott knelt by his bedside and thanked their Father in heaven who had spared his life, heard him say his evening prayer, and left him to his needed sleep.

The next morning Charlie stopped at the

farmhouse on his way to the village store on an errand for Mrs. Watson, and asked Leo to go with him.

He was glad to go, and Mrs. Elliot gave him a list of articles she needed, glad that she need not take Hulda from her work to go.

He had a chance on the way to remember his pledge, and Mrs. Elliot's advice in regard to dumb animals. Upon the bridge which crossed the creek near the village were two boys about his and Charlie's age, and a little boy about four, who was crying bitterly.

"Here is a chance for me to help somebody," thought Leo, and feeling braver because of the little card about his neck under his jacket, he asked Harry why he was crying.

"The big boys are going to drown my kitten," he sobbed.

"Why are they going to drown it?" asked Leo.

"Because," cried the rough boy, who held it, "its mother steals chickens and eats them, and this kitten will do the same when it gets old enough."

"Oh, Archie, let him have it," said the other boy, who saw that Leo was going to help to save it.

"No, I won't give it to him; it is easier to drown it now than when it grows up."

Hearing this, Harry cried louder than ever, and looked through his tears at Leo, hoping he would prove to be a friend in need.

"Your grandmother won't let you keep it when we tell her that its mother steals little chickens," said Archie.

"Yes, she will, for she wants me to have something to play with while mamma and little sister are away."

"Give me the kitten," said Leo, "you have no right to drown it."

"We will see if I haven't, here it goes"; and he ran to the edge of the creek.

"No, you shall not," cried Leo, springing forward and catching Archie's arm. A scuffle ensued in which the kitten's leg was broken, and its pitiful cries were added to those of Harry's.

"There, little boy, take it and run home," said Leo, as he put it in his arms.

The child hugged it to his breast and ran, but Archie followed, snatched it from him, and threw it into the creek.

Harry gave a cry of despair, whereupon Leo told the other boys to hold Archie while he ran into the creek, saved the kitten, and put it wet and trembling into Harry's arms, who ran home with it.

Leo and Charlie went with him, fearing that

Archie would again take it from him, and saw Harry's grandmother.

She was not at all anxious for a kitten, but it had followed Harry from the gate to the house that morning, and seeming motherless and uncared for, she allowed him to keep it. Moreover, she was a true Christian, and saw in the incident a lesson of encouragement in kindness to animals. The kitten's leg was splintered and bandaged, then it was fed with warm milk, and put in a box on a soft cushion, and Harry watched beside it until both fell asleep.

Leo and Charlie had in the meantime kept on to the village store, where they saw Archie and the storekeeper engaged in earnest conversation.

"You say that your mother told you to get quarter of a pound of the tea she always sends for, for which she knows as well as I do that the price is twenty cents. You got five cents' worth of candy before you told me that she had sent you for tea, which leaves only fifteen cents to pay for it."

"She told me that I could get the candy," said Archie, sullenly.

"Then she should have sent enough money to pay for a quarter of a pound of tea, or gotten less tea. How am I to know if you are telling me the truth?"

"She won't care if you only sent fifteen cents' worth."

"How am I to know that? you may not tell her that you got the candy, and she will think I sent her light weight in the tea."

The storekeeper seemed really perplexed, and at last a thought came into his mind.

"Will you two boys go home with Archie," he said, turning to Leo and Charlie, "and see if he tells his mother the truth in this matter?"

"Yes, we will go, if he will go with us to show us the way."

"He had better go, or I will help him," replied the storekeeper; "it is but a short distance away. If he does not tell her the true way of it, you will do me not only a kindness, but justice, to explain it to her."

The boys promised, and Archie went with them.

"Here's your tea," said he, when his mother came to the door to receive it.

"It seems very light," she said, balancing it on her hand, "did you give him all the money I sent?"

"Yes, I gave it to him," and Archie looked at the boys and laughed.

"Yes, he gave it to him, but not all for tea," said Leo, "he got five cents' worth of candy first. The storekeeper sent us to tell you of it."

"Dear me, he need not be so fussy about a trifle like that," she said, half angrily. "Archie is nothing but a child, he will outgrow telling little fibs like that."

"Then you did not tell him that he might get the candy?" said Leo.

"No, but I am not going to fuss about that; all children love candy."

Leo and Charlie returned to the store and told the exact words as to the affair.

"I will give you each five cents' worth of candy," said he, "if you will take this note to her," and he wrote, "you will please send a written order for any goods needed, also state the amount of money you send."

The boys took the note and gave it into her hand, then returned to the store, received their candy and the articles they were sent to purchase, and went home.

"Poor, ignorant mother," said Mrs. Elliot when Leo told her the story, "well, we must have charity, perhaps she knows no better than to think he will outgrow the habit of telling falsehoods. Parents need not expect their children to be truthful when their own regard for truth is so weak that they can say and do such things."

"What was it grandma?" asked Ellen, as she and Sophie ran in, for, to their delight,

the teacher had given the school a half holiday.

Mrs. Elliot told them what Leo had just told her, and then added; "dear children, I will tell you of an incident of my school life, a true story of *not* outgrowing it."

"When I was about the age of Ellen and Sophie, there was a boy about the age of Leo, named James Barton, who came to the same district school where I went.

"It was the custom in country schools at that time to have a wooden paddle hanging near the door, which had on one side the word '*In*,' and on the other '*Out*,' and it was understood that no pupil should go out when the word '*Out*' was in sight.

"But one morning John Archer was out, and James Barton, who was wishing for some one to go with him to get persimmons in the woods adjoining, slipped out while the teacher was not looking, and urged John to go with him.

"'No, I will not,' said John, 'it would be playing truant; I am going into school.'

"'Then don't you dare turn that paddle; leave that for me to do.'

"'No, I will not turn it, for you will be *Out*, and would be telling a story to have it *In*.'

"John went to his place, and the teacher did

not appear to notice, and James returned just in time to be in the next lesson called for recitation.

“‘You and John Archer were out at the same time; who went out first?’ asked the teacher, sternly.

“‘I did,’ replied John.

“‘Did you know he was out when you left the room, James?’”

“‘No, sir; he forgot to turn the paddle; it said “*In,*”’ he replied, with such an air of candor that the teacher believed him, and nothing more was said.”

“Did he ever find out, grandma?” asked Ellen.

“No, but John Archer never forgot the incident, and years after, when he became a rich man and president of a bank, the position of cashier was about to be vacant, and James Barton made application to him for it, and was refused because of that early falsehood. John believed that one who had so little regard for truth should not be placed in a position of trust.”

“Had he told falsehoods after he left school?” asked Leo.

“Yes; John Archer made inquiry, but not for some time after the position of cashier was filled, and found that James had not outgrown

his fault; his word was not to be relied upon."

"Grandma," said Leo thoughtfully, remembering his pledge, "I wonder if I would tell Archie about James Barton if it would help him to tell the truth?"

"It might; at least you would be doing a helpful thing to remind him of his fault by giving him this true story of a boy who had the same failing. God takes heed of every word and action; he is a God of truth and abhors falsehood."

CHAPTER IX.

SALLY'S HOLIDAY.

“**I**SN'T it splendid that we are to have holiday this afternoon?” Sally said, as she and Sophie and Ellen were hurrying from school at twelve o'clock one day.

“Yes, and O Sally! I thought of something the very instant the teacher told us of it,” said Ellen.

“What is it?” asked the other two, eagerly.

“Why, for you to come to grandma's and bring your dolls the very minute you have told your mother and finished your dinner. We will play in our play-house under the big apple tree in the orchard, and will make dresses for our dolls out of the pieces that grandma gave us, and you can make a dress for yours out of what Sophie's aunt gave you.”

“Yes, I will,” cried Sally, gleefully: “Dorcas needs a new dress, and she shall have it out of the piece of red silk that Sophie's aunt gave me.”

“Sarah needs a new one, too,” said Sophie, “and Julia must have a new apron.”

“And O Sally!” said Ellen, “grandma gave us a large piece of blue cloth to make capes; I

will make one for Matilda, and Sophie is going to make one for Sarah, and you shall have enough to make one for Dorcas."

"May I?" cried Sally, her eyes beaming with delight; "I will bring needle and thread and my thimble."

"Don't you ever make anything for Amelia Jane?" asked Sophie.

"No, for she had such pretty clothes on when Ellen's mother gave her to me that mamma said it would be better not to take them off, but just keep her as she is, and make clothes for Dorcas."

"We will trim all the jackets with lace," said Sophie.

"Yes, and I will bring all that your aunty gave me, and I will bring my new picture book and some of the ginger cakes that mother made for me to take to school."

"Oh, do! and I will bring out my set of dishes, and Hulda will give us some good things, and we will have a little supper under the apple tree."

Filled with joy over these delightful plans, Sally ran home, and dashed in to tell her mother of the holiday and the plans for the afternoon.

"O Sally! I was just wishing that you were here," replied her mother; "I am sorry to dis-

appoint you, but I am so tired and have headache from loss of sleep last night, that I can scarcely sit up. Elsie fretted nearly all night; her coming teeth make her feverish."

Sally's first feeling was that of bitter disappointment. The words "to be helpful to everybody and do all the good I can every day," came to her mind, and a thrill of joy filled her heart.

"What can I do, mamma? what would help you best?" she asked.

"If I could sleep for a few hours I would be a new person. Elsie needs to be out in the fresh air and sunshine, and frequent sups of fresh water to cool her fevered and swollen gums."

"She shall have it, mamma, and I will take her out under the apple tree in the yard while you go to bed;" and going to the pump she brought the cool, sparkling water, which Elsie drank eagerly.

Sally spread a rug upon the floor, placed Elsie and her playthings upon it, then followed Mrs. Watson to the bed room, helped her to disrobe, and saw her sink her weary head upon the pillow.

"Shall I make you a cup of tea, mamma? I will, if you will tell me how to make it."

"No, dear, I do not need anything but this

blessed chance to be quiet and sleep. Do you eat your dinner, and then do the best you can with Elsie until I can take her off your hands."

Sally closed the blinds to shut out the light from the aching eyes, went quietly out, and then returned with the tea bell.

"Mamma, if you ring this I will know you need something, and will run in; I will not go far from the house, for when Elsie gets tired of the big tree, I will put her in her carriage and wheel her up and down the lane under the shade of the cherry trees."

"Take any plan you choose, dear, I am sure you can amuse her, and will take good care of her."

Sally ate the luncheon that she had expected to finish at school, and the afternoon was spent differently from what she intended, but not unhappily. A feeling of peace filled her heart; she had not failed to keep her pledge of doing the best she could to be helpful.

Evening came, and Mrs. Watson, refreshed by sleep and rest, arose and prepared a good supper by the time Mr. Watson came in from a distant field, and father, mother and Sally sat down to it, with Elsie in the high chair beside her.

When Mr. Watson heard from the mother of Sally's holiday, which had passed so differently

from what was planned, he looked tenderly upon her, as he said, "You will have many such experiences in life, my little Sally. We all lay plans for pleasure, but duty steps in, and we must obey her voice if we wish happiness in this life and in the life to come."

"You can sit in the rocking-chair in the porch, mamma, with Elsie, and I will wash the dishes," said Sally, when the father had gone back to the field.

"I will, dear, for my head feels weak yet, and the evening air will do it good."

Sally was an adept at this work from having frequently helped her mother; it was quickly and neatly done, then she washed hands and face, brushed her hair, and was about to sit down in the porch when she saw two little girls coming across the field.

"O mamma! it is Ellen and Sophie, and they have their dolls," cried Sally, clasping her hands in delight; "I will run and get Dorcas and go to meet them."

"Why didn't you come over, Sally?" asked Ellen, as soon as they met; "we had a mind to come for you."

"I could not go. Mamma had a headache because she could not sleep last night, for dear little Elsie kept her awake, and I kept Elsie all afternoon, and mamma had a good sleep."

"You kept your pledge by helping your mother, and we kept ours by not getting mad because you did not come," said Sophie.

"But it was grandma who said that it would be a good way to keep them," said Ellen. "We said you did not care if we were disappointed, and grandma said we must have charity, and believe that you had a good reason; and now we are glad we came to see you, and can stay an hour."

"I am so glad. I want you to see my pansies."

"Pansies?" said Sophie; "where did you get them?"

"I got the seed at the post-office. One day papa sent me there to get our mail, and people had gotten their letters and papers and had gone. I saw a little white package lying upon the floor and gave it to the postmaster. 'Somebody has dropped it out of a letter,' he said; 'we will open it and see what it is.' So he opened it, and there lay six little gray seeds. 'I wonder what they are,' he said; 'do you know, Sally?' 'No sir,' I said; 'I never saw any like them before.' 'I guess they are not of much account,' he said; 'you found them, Sally, and may take them home with you.' 'But somebody might come and ask for them,' I said, 'and then you could not give them.'

‘Yes, that is true. Well, suppose you leave them with me for a week, and if no one calls for them they are yours.’”

“Did you leave them?” asked Ellen.

“Yes; and in a week I went to the post-office, and he said no one had asked for them, and it would soon be too late to plant them, and he gave them to me.”

By this time they had reached the cottage, and Ellen and Sophie kissed Elsie and then ran to the garden back of the cottage.

“Oh, the lovely, lovely things!” cried Sophie, clasping her hands in delight, while Ellen knelt down to look at them closer; “I never, never saw such large ones.”

“They are all different, and all so beautiful that I do not know which is the most lovely,” cried Ellen; “just look at the snow-white one, and at this purple one that looks as if made of velvet.”

“I took some to Cousin Johnny yesterday evening,” said Sally, “and oh, how pleased he was! I put them in a glass dish in the window by the sofa, where he lay, and he just looked and looked at them and touched them with his fingers.”

“Who is your Cousin Johnny?” asked Ellen, “and where does he live?”

“His mother is my mother’s sister, and his

father is dead, and they live in a house near the village."

"Do we pass it to go to the store or to school?"

"No; because it is the other end of the village, past the school-house."

"Who lives there beside Johnny and his mother?"

"No one but Cousin Horace."

"Is he Johnny's brother?"

"No; Johnny has no brother or sister. Cousin Horace is his cousin, too. His mother was mamma's sister, as is Cousin Johnny's mother. She is dead, and his father is dead, and Aunt Graham. that is Johnny's mother, took him when they died."

"If he is a cousin as much as Johnny, why don't you give him some of the pansies?" asked Sophie.

"Because he is older than Johnny, and is well and strong, while Johnny is sick most of the time, and has to stay home from school. Mamma says I am keeping my pledge in doing all I can to help and cheer Johnny."

"I never saw your Cousin Horace or Johnny at school," remarked Ellen.

"Oh, they do not go to our little summer school, but to a bigger one in the village. It is not like ours, but is called a public school, and

has a man teacher. The school-house is shut up now ; it is vacation."

"Which do you like best, Johnny or Horace?" asked Ellen.

"I like them both, only Cousin Horace is sullen sometimes."

"What is sullen?" asked Sophie.

"He won't talk, and mamma says he acts as if he is discontented."

"Maybe he thinks your aunt does not want him there," said Ellen.

"Oh, but she does. She is just as good to him as she is to Cousin Johnny, only that Johnny is the youngest and is sick so much."

"Sally!" called her mother from the kitchen door, "here is a lady to see you ; tell Ellen and Sophie to come, too ; she knows them."

"Who can she be?" said the little girls, much surprised ; but they went through the house to the front porch, and there sat Miss Wood.

"How have you enjoyed your holiday, my dears?" she asked, kindly.

"Oh, we have had a splendid time," said Ellen.

"It was a very unexpected one to me," continued the teacher, turning to Mrs. Watson ; "a dear friend was taken suddenly ill and sent for me, and I was compelled to give the little

ones holiday. My friend sent a carriage for me, and brought me back to the village again, thus leaving me time to make a few calls after my return."

"I am glad that you favored us with one," said Mrs. Watson, hospitably.

"Yes, and before coming I called to see your sister, Mrs. Graham, and Johnny."

"How is Johnny to-day, Miss Wood?" asked Mrs. Watson earnestly.

"He seems quite cheerful and so pleased with the pansies Sally took him last evening; and no wonder, they are the finest I ever saw. My child," she said, turning to Sally, "how did you learn to bring pansies to such perfection?"

"Papa fixed the ground for me; it was well-rotted sod, and I attended to them every day after the seeds came up."

"Johnny told me about your finding the seed. Do you know those pansies are very rare? They are the *Fire King*, the *Rainbow*, the *Black Knight*, *Rosy Morn*, *Crown Prince*, and *Snow Queen*, and all the finest specimens I have ever seen."

"Sally paid them great attention," smiled Mrs. Watson; "she has great love for flowers."

"And great taste in arranging them," said Miss Wood; "she is a real artist in that line,

as proved by those arranged for Johnny. And that brings me to my errand here. My father is, as you know, a florist, and is in need of a helper to arrange bouquets, and I have not a particle of taste in that line. If Sally could stop an hour each evening after school to help with the bouquets that are to be shipped to the city, he will pay her well for her work."

Sally was delighted with the opportunity to work among flowers, and her mother was willing that she should accept the offer, and thus her unselfish wish to comfort Johnny in his affliction brought a reward in this life, and was a treasure laid up in heaven.

CHAPTER X.

WHY ELMER WARE WAS CHOSEN.

BEFORE Leo left the city to visit the farmhouse, he called to bid Miss Ashton good-bye, and she had a request to make of him.

"I am glad you came, Leo," she said, kindly, "for I intended to ask you the next time I saw you to go sometimes to visit Elmer Ware. Now that you are going away, I hope you will go to see him, and if you will write to him while you are away I am sure you will give a great pleasure. He has many cares for one so young, and very few pleasures. Your going to see him before you go would be a bright spot in his life, and to look forward to a letter from you, and the receiving, would be a joy not only to him, but to his grandmother."

"I will go this evening, Miss Ashton, and will take Grandmother Elliot's letter and the Helping Hand little card she sent me."

"All will be of interest to him; have you the card with you?"

Leo unbuttoned his jacket, and taking the cord from his neck from which the card was suspended, he put it into her hand.

"A truly excellent guide for any one to follow," she said, upon reading the sentence upon it—"and you will be obeying it by becoming a friend of Elmer Ware."

That evening, with his mother's consent, he went to see Elmer, and staid an hour, and it was hard to decide which boy took the most pleasure in the visit.

Elmer was very much pleased with the Helping Hand card, and read the sentence more than once.

"I wish I had one," he said, wistfully, "it would always keep one in mind of doing right."

"Yes, it keeps me," replied Leo, "and I will ask grandmother to send you one, and it will come in the first letter I write."

"Then will I be a member of the society?"

"Yes, you and me, and Cousin Ellen and Sophie and Sally."

All this was a charming prospect to Elmer, something to look forward to as he went about the streets with his papers.

Leo had been as good as his word; the very evening he reached the farmhouse he told Mrs. Elliot all about it, and she gladly got the card and wrote the pledge upon it, and helped him to write the letter to Elmer in which it was enclosed.

Elmer received it, and, following the example

of Leo, he wore it hung by a cord around his neck and safely protected under his jacket, and like the other members he felt very important in belonging to a society, and resolved to do his best to keep the pledge.

The next evening he had a paper left over, and took it home to read, as he was anxious to examine the advertisements, hoping to see one which might be of use to him.

He turned to the "want column, and was attracted by the very first sentence upon which his glance rested.

"WANTED! A boy in a lawyer's office; apply at 9 o'clock on Monday morning."

These were the words, together with address and the salary to be given. It seemed to be there especially for him, and he was resolved to be on hand promptly on time and secure the position if he could; his grandmother agreeing with him that it was worth the trial. It was vacation, and for two months at least he could be earning something, and they would leave the future in the hand of a kind Providence who had watched over them and kept them.

It happened that another boy named Morris Allen had seen the notice, and resolved to secure it if he could, and on Monday morning the two boys went down town on the same car, not knowing each other's intention.

Elmer had seen Norris frequently, but had no acquaintance with him for the reason they went to different schools.

The car soon filled, and when a gray-haired gentleman (Leo's grandfather) came in, there was no place for him.

"Please take this seat, sir," said Elmer, rising quickly.

Mr. Forester thanked him, and sitting down in the corner vacated, opened his morning paper, and Elmer had just reached for a strap to steady himself when a man next to Norris left the car, and Elmer took the place.

"It was silly in you to jump up and give this old man your place; if you had waited he would have found one," said Norris in a low tone, but heard by Mr. Forester.

"I think it is a boy's place to give the seat to a lady or to any older person," returned Elmer; "suppose it had been your father?"

"I would let him stand for not buying a bicycle for me," said Norris, a frown darkening his face; "now I am bound to earn one for myself, and no thanks to him. There is a lawyer who wants an office boy, and I am his man"

"Why, that is where I am going," said Elmer; "I wonder if he would take us both?"

"He shall see me first. I was in the car first, and have the best right. Do you want to earn money for a bicycle?"

"No; I want to earn something to help my grandmother and my little sister. Since father died she has had a hard time to clothe us and keep me in school. I have sold papers of evenings, and done what little I could, but feel that I must do more. But we are both sorry that I must stay from school if I get the place and can keep it after vacation is over."

"But you won't get it if I can see the man first. I should think you would be glad to leave school; I hate it, and always did."

"Father and mother always said that there is nothing like a good education to help one in life, and grandmother says the same," replied Elmer mildly; "I hope I can study some of evenings if I get the place."

"But you won't get it if I can help it. I have two reasons for wanting it, and you have but one. I am bound to have a bicycle and I am bound to leave school. Mother tried to coax father to get me one, but he wouldn't; said he could not afford it, but I know that is only an excuse, so I will let him see that I can earn money of my own, and the folks at home shall not see one cent of it."

A passenger coming in at that moment

brushed against Mr. Forester's umbrella, and it fell to the floor. As Norris was next to him, Elmer waited for him to pick it up, but seeing that he was not intending to do so, he arose and quickly placed it in its former position, the little card doing its work.

"Thank you, my boy," said Mr. Forester; and lowering his paper, he glanced at both boys, noticing the perfect neatness of Elmer and the want of it in Norris.

"Do either of you happen to know the time?" he asked pleasantly.

"Yes, sir; it is ten minutes of nine; we have just passed the clock on St. Luke's Church," replied Elmer.

"Carries a watch, and has to ask the time," said Norris, in a low tone; "I wouldn't have told him nor picked up his umbrella; he is old enough to wait upon himself," and he laughed at the thought that he had said a witty thing.

Elmer touched the bell when they neared the corner where they were to leave the car, and Mr. Forester left it at the same time; but the boys hurried away, and did not know that he followed them to the office, which he entered by another door.

"Did you call in an answer to our advertisement?" asked the clerk when they presented themselves.

"Yes, and I am to be the first to see the lawyer," said Norris promptly.

"Well, follow me," and the clerk led the way to the private office, and the surprise of Norris was great, as was that of Elmer a moment later, to find that their fellow-passenger (Mr. Forester) and the lawyer were one and the same.

"Show the other boy in," said Mr. Forester to the clerk, and Elmer entered and stood beside Norris, both looking anxiously at Mr. Forester, who was writing upon a slip of paper.

"You both wish the position of office boy at the salary mentioned in the advertisement?" he said when he finished.

"Yes, sir," they answered.

"And if either one is engaged, he can remain to-day."

"Yes, sir."

"You will please tell me your names."

They gave them, and the lawyer wrote them down upon a slip of paper. "Very good!" he said; "Elmer, you can stay. Norris, I will bid you good morning."

"Why don't you want me?" asked Norris, insolently; "you have not asked us one question except our names."

"There was no need to ask questions; here are my objections to you," and he passed him

a slip of paper, upon which was written: "Want of honor of parents and duty to them," "selfishness," "disrespect to your elders," "ignorance," "rudeness," "impertinence," "want of neatness."

Norris left the room crimson with anger, and Elmer began his light duties that day.

This was great news to Leo when his mother wrote and told him of it. Elmer Ware in his grandfather's office! He could scarcely understand it. The same day came a letter from Elmer telling the good news; "and Leo," he added, "his name is the same as yours, and I am so glad."

It was a pleasure to Leo's parents and his grandfather to know that the boy Mr. Forester had chosen was the one for whom Miss Ashton had such high regard, and the one whom Leo had visited and was corresponding with, and that Elmer was a member of the Helping Hand Society.

On Elmer's part it was a great surprise and joy to hear from Leo that his employer was Leo's grandfather; it was another tie to bind him to his new friend.

Charlie and his dog Dash were Leo's almost constant companions, and very often Horace Beauchamp, Sally's other cousin, came to see them. Though living beyond the other end of

the village, he did not mind the walk to meet such pleasant companions as were Leo and Charlie. Quite frequently Mrs. Graham told Horace to invite the five—Charlie, Leo, Sally, Ellen and Sophie—to come and take supper with him and Johnny, and play upon the lawn, and the invitation was never declined. Owing to his weakness, Johnny could not join in any of the active plays, but he could sit under the shade of the great willow tree and enjoy seeing them with the patience of one used to sickness.

At length the term in the little people's school, in which Sally and Ellen and Sophie were pupils, came to an end, and on the very last day something happened which was a surprise to the teacher and all the scholars and a great joy to Ellen and Mrs. Elliot.

It was the custom of the authorities to cut down a few trees in the woods which nearly surrounded the school-house, for the winter fuel, not only for that school, but for the brick school-house in the village for older pupils.

This was always of great interest to the children, and so expert did they become by the time the third tree was felled, that they could tell by the sound made by the axes, the exact time when they would be notified to leave the building.

"Why must we go out?" asked Ellen when

she first heard the sound of the axes that morning, and Sally had whispered to her that leaving the house would follow.

"Because the tree might fall on the school-house and kill us," replied that wise little woman; "besides they know that we would not study, but would keep looking out to see the tree fall, and we might as well be out."

"Where will we go?" asked Sophie, full of interest.

"They tell us where to stand, and it is always a good distance off, the branches reach so far when a tree is on the ground."

"I wonder which way that one they are cutting now will fall?"

"I guess it will fall right across the school-yard; oh, we will have fun after it is down riding on the branches, and pretending they are horses. And we will put a board across the trunk and see-saw."

"But this is the last day of school," said Sophie.

"Oh, so it is; I forgot that;" and little Sally was really disappointed.

The blows given by two sturdy wood-choppers, with sharp axes, soon brought the tree to the dangerous limit, and while one rested, the other came to the school-house door.

"It is time for the children to take to the

woods now, Miss," he said to the teacher, and there was a great hurrying for sun-bonnets and caps, and the little ones ran shouting with delight to the place pointed out by the woodman.

It was quite an exciting time, and Ellen and Sophie resolved to put their hands over their ears when they saw the great tree falling, for Sally had told them it would make such a noise that it would shake the earth.

But when they heard the cracking sound of splintering wood, and saw the great giant of the forest tremble before it commenced to measure its length upon the ground, they forgot the noise it would make in the excitement of seeing it fall.

They all ran to it the moment it was down, and Sally's bright eyes saw a bird's nest, and in it something was glistening in the beams of the morning sun.

No eggs nor birds were in it, and Sally picked it from the notch among the branches, and ran with it to Ellen, for it was her fine gold chain that was woven in the nest so beautifully and securely that Miss Wood advised her not to disturb it until she had shown it to her grandmother.

"I will put it in my desk and keep it for you until school is out this evening," said the

teacher, kindly, and Ellen gladly passed it into her care.

They all returned to their lessons, and at noon had the great delight of riding upon the branches, for the wood-choppers were sawing into logs the first tree cut, which was some distance down in the woods.

In the evening Ellen bade good-bye to their dear teacher, as did all the scholars, and then with the bird's nest in her basket, went home, and when she reached there found another great pleasure awaiting her. Her Aunt Lizzie had come home from the seminary, it being vacation and Mrs. Elliot had kept it for a surprise.

They were all charmed with the artistic taste exercised by the bird in weaving the gold chain in its nest.

"It is really an ornament, Ellen," said her Aunt Lizzie, "and the chain will be as safe there as anywhere, I would not disturb it."

Mrs. Elliot agreed with her in this, and Ellen whose past experience kept her from craving to wear it again, was more than willing to leave it to the security of the bird's nest.

"I will tell you how we can make a pretty parlor ornament of it," said Aunt Lizzie, upon reflection. "I have a beautiful stuffed red bird that one of the girls at school gave me; her brother is an expert taxidermist, and the bird is

as natural as if alive and singing upon a bough. We will ask Leo and Charlie to get us a branch of the oak tree that was cut down, and put the nest in a notch, and set the bird near it."

"Little fellows like them would not know what to bring," said Hulda, who had joined the group. "I will go this afternoon to the school-house and get one of the right kind; I would as lief go as not."

"Oh, let us go with you, Hulda," cried Ellen, grasping her arm as she was returning to the kitchen.

"Yes, you can go, and Sally, too, if you can get word to her."

"We will run over and tell her, won't we, Sophie?" and they hurried to put on their sun-bonnets.

"I will have supper at five o'clock, and go as soon as it is over, it will be cooler then," quoth Hulda.

"That will be better," said Mrs. Elliot, "then you need not hurry home, but can enjoy the walk. In the meantime I have thought of a large, clear, glass shade I have in the attic, which will be suited exactly to put over the branch with its nest and bird, and Ellen may have it. It was used for wax flowers when they were in date, and has a nice walnut stand, with feet."

"Oh, grandma, let me give it all to mamma for a birthday present," said Ellen, eagerly.

"Certainly; I know that she will appreciate it, and will agree to having it belong to both of you."

Then Ellen and Sophie hurried across the field to tell Sally, who was delighted with the invitation, and before they had finished the good supper that Hulda had prepared in honor of the return of the daughter of the house to the old homestead, Sally was seen, sun-bonnet in hand, running across to join them in the walk. She received a slice, a generous one, of the fine pound cake that had graced the supper table, and though she had just finished supper, it did not come amiss.

Thus the happy summer passed, September was near at hand, and the children must return to the city and school.

Farmer Watson took Leo, Ellen, and Sophie back in the long farm wagon, and Sally, Charlie, and Horace went back with them, enjoying to the full the charming journey, with frequent stoppages in the woods and by flowing streams.

Horace went over to Grandma Elliot's farmhouse the evening before and staid overnight with Leo, in order to be there for an early start in the morning.

Johnny saw him leave and bade him good-

bye, without a word of complaint that he was deprived of the pleasure; the faithful training of his loving Christian mother reconciled him to his lot.

Leo went home without having done all the good he had hoped in regard to Archie, for when he told him the story of James Barton, Archie saw his intention, and laughed in derision at the idea of a boy of Leo's age posing as instructor.

Leo was abashed, but having set out to do good, he showed his Helping Hand card, whereupon Archie called him a "milk-sop," and "sissy-boy," and said he was tied to his grandmother's apron strings.

"Never mind," said Mrs. Elliot when Leo, much chagrined, told her of it, "Archie may have put on that bravado air to conceal his real feeling. The story of James Barton may have its influence upon him: we can only pray that it may."

CHAPTER XI.

GRANDFATHER FORESTER'S LESSON.

IT spoke well for Leo, Ellen and Sophie that Grandma Elliot and Hulda were sorry to see them go, and missed them very much after they were gone. They were gladly welcomed at home, and Bridget shed tears of joy to see Ellen.

They were all promptly on time the first day of school, and Sophie had the great pleasure of stopping each morning for Ellen on the way there.

Elmer Ware was still in the office of Leo's grandfather, and went to an evening school and studied every leisure time, having help from Mr. Forester, and was still in Miss Ashton's class in Sunday-school.

The first Sunday after Leo's return from the country he came home from Sunday school seeming much out of spirits, his eyes full of tears.

"What is the matter, Leo?" asked Mrs. Forester, in surprise.

"I will not go to that Sunday-school another day," he said, as he put his library book upon

the table and glanced through the door to the dining-room to see if dinner was ready.

"What has offended you, dear? You seemed always satisfied until now."

"No, I am not satisfied. I don't like my teacher, Miss Ashton, nor the superintendent, nor any of the boys in the class except Elmer Ware, and he did not treat me any better than did the rest of them to-day."

"Not treat you any better. Why, what did they do?"

"Not one of them made any account of me."

"What account did you wish them to make of you, dear?"

"I thought they would ask where I went on the six weeks' vacation, but not one of them did. I wanted to tell them of Grandma Elliot's farm, and of the horses, and the woods, and about Farmer Watson, and Charlie and Dash, and of the kitten we saved from drowning, and show them my Helping Hand card and tell them all about it, and lots of other things. I thought they would ask me before the lessons commenced, but they were talking to Elmer Ware, and so the minute school was out I came right home."

"But, Leo, Sunday-school is not the place to talk of these things; you have all week at school to talk of your pleasures. Besides, I

doubt very much if one of the class except Elmer knew that you were out of the city."

This was a new view of the case and the correct one, but it gave Leo a thought very different from what his mother intended.

"That is just it, mother. None of the boys in the class go to my school, so I am going to leave that Sunday-school and go where some of the boys in my grade go."

Mrs. Forester said no more, believing it to be but a momentary irritation, which would disappear when he had dinner, or would certainly be forgotten before the next Sunday; but when toward the last of the week he was of the same opinion, she consulted his father and grandfather about it.

"Let him make the change and try it," said Mr. Forester; "he will never be satisfied until he does."

"Yes, I advise that, too," said Grandfather Forester. "I have seen older persons than Leo imagine that they were not treated with sufficient consideration in their church home and leave it for another, of even different denomination, and were glad to return."

Leo's parents and grandfather were too broad-minded to have prejudice against any religious denomination, but, as was natural and right, had preference to the one to which they

belonged ; but when Sunday came and Leo expressed his intention of going to another Sunday-school, no objection was made, and he went. The superintendent met him at the door, asked him to what Sunday-school he belonged, showed a little surprise that he wished to change, and was about to conduct him to a place.

“I wish to be in a class with boys I know,” said Leo, and upon being told who they were, the superintendent took him there, put a lesson leaf in his hand, different from those Leo had studied from, and left him.

“What brought you to this school?” asked one of the boys, whom Leo had always looked upon as a good friend.

“I came because I wanted to,” replied Leo curtly.

“But the class is large enough now, and Miss Fuller will tell you so when she comes,” added another.

Leo was silent from wounded feelings and disappointment, and at that moment Miss Fuller came in. “I am glad to see you,” she said cordially, when introduced to the new scholar ; “although I have now as many in the class as I can attend to well, but will do the best I can. I am very unwilling to decline to take a boy who wishes a place in my class.”

So even the teacher was not overjoyed to see him, and at that moment the superintendent came by.

"I allowed him to come to your class, Miss Fuller, because he desired it," he explained; "but if you do not wish to add another to your already large class, I will place him elsewhere."

"If he takes me 'elsewhere,' as he calls it, I will not come here another day," thought Leo, coloring with chagrin. "Even the superintendent does not make much account of me."

"I will make the trial and do the best I can," replied Miss Fuller; and Leo wished earnestly that he was back in his old place instead of where he was—"only allowed to stay because he wished it."

When the hour was over he was plied with questions as to his reason for leaving his own school, and when one of the boys hinted that perhaps he was invited to leave, his indignation knew no bounds. His parents and grandfather asked no questions upon his return, but judged by his silence that his change had not been the success he thought it would be, and when the next Sunday came and he went to his own school, they were sure of it. There he met with a deeper fall to his pride, for Miss Ashton, having heard from the class that Leo had gone to another Sunday-school, took an-

other boy to fill his place. As Leo was a former member, she thought it wiser to allow him to take his old place, and the new boy was placed in another class, and was not at all pleased to have to leave to make room for him, and the other boys did not welcome him with the warmth he expected.

"Here comes our turncoat!" said one of them, when, school being out, they were leaving the building. "Why did you leave here, and why did you leave the other school?"

Leo was too near crying to trust his voice to speak. He hurried home, and again no questions were asked, all thinking it better to wait until he chose to tell what troubled him. The next evening he was in his grandfather's room listening to stories of the times when his grandfather was a boy or of interesting things he had read. When bed-time came he rose to go, and Mr. Forester said: "Leo, did you ever hear of a person named *Æsop*?"

"No, grandfather; who is he?"

"He was a heathen slave, a native of Athens, in Greece, and lived about six hundred years before Christ. He wrote many fables, which pointed out the follies of mankind, and no writer of our times has written fables so useful and entertaining. *Æsop's Fables* was my favorite book when I was a boy."

"Tell me one of the fables, grandfather," said Leo, coming back to his chair; "I do so love to hear you tell stories."

"I will do better than that; I will read one of them to you," and taking from his book-case a copy of the old-time book which Leo had never seen, he again took his place by the table and lamp.

"Why, grandfather, I did not know you had any story-books in your book-case," said Leo in surprise; "I thought they were all law books and other things that grown people like to read."

"My books are what are called standard works, but I think *Æsop* can be classed among them. As all the fables are new to you, I think I will read "The Jackdaw and the Peacocks."

Leo was all attention while his grandfather read: "A certain jackdaw was so proud and ambitious that, not contented to live within his own sphere, he picked up the feathers which fell from peacocks, stuck them among his own, and introduced himself among them. They soon found him out, and falling upon him with their sharp bills, punished him for his presumption. Full of grief at this treatment, he returned to his old companions, but they, knowing that he had deserted them for others, refused him admittance into their company."

“Grandfather,” said Leo, reflectively, “I was like that jackdaw when I left my own Sunday school and went to another.”

His grandfather smiled, but made no response. He saw that Leo had made the application that was intended.

CHAPTER XII.

WHY HORACE CHANGED HIS OPINION.

THE beautiful autumn weather passed and winter had come. Leo, Ellen, and Sophie could go to school, but little Sally, in the country, owing to the muddy roads, rain, snow, and sleet, had to stay at home.

But she studied her lessons and recited them to her mother, played with the dolls and her dishes, helped her mother care for little Elsie, and was passing a happy and useful winter.

With the help of her mother she wrote to Ellen and Sophie, and received letters in return, and all were looking forward to the next summer when they would meet again.

Horace being twelve years old went to the school in the village, and Johnny went on pleasant days, but was not allowed to overtax himself by study.

"Horace," called his aunt, one morning, "wake up dear, it is time to make the fire," and, wakened from sleep, the boy felt more than usually cross and out of spirits.

"Why doesn't she call sometimes upon

Johnny to make the fire and pump fresh water for the tea-kettle," he grumbled to himself as he stepped to the floor, and commenced dressing as he glanced with frowning brow at his sleeping cousin. "He has all the little jobs, such as feeding the chickens and gathering chips, but when it comes to carrying wood and shoveling paths in the snow, it is 'Horace' that is called upon to do it. He looks as well as I do, and I don't believe there is anything the matter with him."

Filled with these thoughts he went to the kitchen which was spotlessly clean, but never an attractive place to him on winter mornings, and with a cloud upon his spirits, seemed less so than ever.

He bathed face and hands, brushed his hair, then set to work to make a fire in the brightly-polished stove, his thoughts still on what he considered the hardships of his life.

"I am glad that we had plenty of good dry wood stacked in the shed before this snow came on," said Mrs. Graham, cheerfully, as she came from her room to the kitchen and noticed the bright fire.

Horace made no answer, and she continued, "I expect Miss Fanshaw here to-day to remain to help me sew on school suits for you and Johnny, and we must have the sitting-room nice and

warm before she comes. You can kindle a fire there, dear, while I am getting breakfast."

Horace made no answer, but went about the work with a clouded brow. He had no liking for Miss Fanshaw, who considered that her sixty years gave her the right to speak her mind to younger people, and to give them advice when she saw that it was needed. He called to mind that every time she sewed there she took occasion to tell him that he could never do too much to repay his aunt for her goodness to him, and he considered that she, like his aunt, and all the people he knew, were partial to Johnny, and felt that he had not one real friend upon earth.

The good breakfast of coffee, steak, and buckwheat cakes, brightened his spirits somewhat, and when it was finished he prepared for school.

"Isn't Johnny going?" he asked in surprise, when he noticed that his cousin was not up to breakfast.

"No, the snow makes the walking difficult; it will be better for him to stay at home."

"When did she ever think the snow too deep, or the roads too muddy for me?" he thought bitterly, as he took up his books and basket of good luncheon, then went out without a word of good-bye.

"I wonder what time our 'sissy-boy' got up to breakfast?" he said to himself as he came in sight of the farm-house on his return from school in the evening. "Of course I will milk the cow, and feed her and the pigs and chickens, and split kindling for the morning fire, while he sits by the fire and reads pretty stories."

In this mood he entered the kitchen, put his books aside, and was about to go to the stable, when he noticed the absence of his cousin.

"Where is Johnny?" he asked.

"He has not been well all day," replied Mrs. Graham, "and I have made a bed for him on the sofa in the sitting-room."

A sniff of derision was the response of Horace, which, if noticed by his aunt, elicited no sign.

By the time he had finished his evening work supper was ready, and he took his place at the table with his aunt and Miss Fanshaw, and although the stewed chicken, hot biscuits, and honey made his favorite meal, discontent was not driven from his mind, nor the evidence of it from his manner.

"You can study your lessons in the sitting-room this evening, dear," said Mrs. Graham when all was in order for the night. "We will let the kitchen fire go out; the fire in the sit-

ting-room has heated the drum in my room, and I will put Johnny on the cot in there; I must have him near me now that he is sick."

Again the look of derision came into the countenance of Horace at this petting of his cousin, but he said nothing.

At early bedtime Mrs. Graham led Johnny up to the cot in her room, and Miss Fanshaw, left alone with Horace, stitched quietly by the glowing stove and bright light.

Horace studied diligently for an hour longer, only halting once to put more wood in the stove, then closed his book and was about to go to his room and to bed.

"Horace," said Miss Fanshaw, "from whom did you inherit your sullen, envious, and jealous disposition? I knew your mother and your Aunt Graham, and your Aunt Watson since they were infants, and sweeter, nobler, more unselfish natures were never given to mortals. Your father was one of the best of men, broad-minded and honorable, and had not a particle of envy or jealousy."

"Who told you that I was envious and jealous?" asked the boy, angrily.

"Your countenance says it as plainly as your lips could utter it. I have noticed it for two years when I have been here to sew, and this time plainer than ever. Horace, I am about to

tell you something that perhaps your aunt would not like me to tell you, but I believe it to be a duty to her and to you. Will you promise to let it be a secret between us?"

"Yes, I promise," answered the boy, the good words spoken of his parents having won his interest.

"As you may know, Horace, when your sweet, young mother died, you were but three years old. Your father had died a year before, and there was not a person in the wide world to care for you except Mrs. Graham, for your Aunt Watson had no home to offer you, for being a young girl and an orphan, she made her home with your aunt until she married Mr. Watson. Well, your Aunt Graham took you, not only willingly, but gladly, thus keeping you from being taken to an orphan asylum. She brought you to this old homestead, where she and your mother, and Aunt Watson were born, and where your mother lived until she married your father and went to live in his home. Your Aunt Graham's husband bought this place, and she has always lived here. She has no means except it, and you have not a dollar. She has had a hard struggle to keep the home since your Uncle Graham died, but has given you every comfort and advantage in her power to give.

“When you were five years old, and Johnny three, you took scarlet fever, and were at death’s door, but her prayers and faithful nursing brought you through it. Night and day she watched beside you, and during your long weakness which followed, was always patient and loving. You were scarcely well when Johnny took the disease, and she had again a long spell of nursing, for helpers are hard to obtain in the country at such times; but she was cheerful and untiring, supported by her faith in God, for she is one of the truest Christians I have ever known.

“The scarlet fever is liable to leave one with some weakness or ailment. In your case it did not; you have grown into a strong, healthy lad, but it left poor Johnny with a weak heart, that cannot bear any tax upon it. His mother is warned by physicians not to allow him to lift any burden, not to run, or jump, or climb, or to use his arms more than possible, and give her the hope that with great care he might outgrow it. Johnny, in the meantime, is to be kept in ignorance that his heart is weaker than that of other boys. Now you know why your aunt spares him all she can, and I hope that you will cease to censure her in your mind as you have done.”

“Oh, Miss Fanshaw, do release me from my

promise, and let me go to her and beg her forgiveness," implored Horace, with tears of remorse in his fine eyes.

"No, you must not tell her; it will do no one any good. But there is a better way. Be kind to the dear, patient, saintly little boy, who may be called from earth to heaven at any moment. Do all you can to help your aunt to bear the burden; do it not only willingly, but cheerfully, and ask your Father in heaven to cast from your heart all envy and jealousy."

"I will; I will indeed, Miss Fanshaw, and I do thank you for telling me this. I am ashamed of myself, and will never, never act toward Aunt Graham and Cousin Johnny as I have done."

Horace kept his word, and Mrs. Graham thanked God for his changed manner, and rejoiced that he was becoming such help and company for Johnny.

A few weeks after this conversation, Horace answered the letter which Leo had written to him a short time after his return to the city.

"Dear Leo," he wrote, "do you remember that you asked me to join the Helping Hand Society, and showed me your card, and I would have nothing to do with it? Well, I must tell you that Miss Fanshaw has been my Helping Hand Society and card, and when I see you I will tell

you all about it. And Leo, I never knew until this winter what a grand woman Aunt Graham is, nor what a splendid boy is Johnny. His goodness has made me see how sinful I am, and made me long to be good like him. We are such company for each other, and love each other so much that I hope nothing will ever part us. The doctors say that he is much stronger this winter, and, with the same care, believe he will be entirely well.

“And, Leo, do you remember the kitten that you and Charlie Watson helped save from drowning, and then helped set its broken leg? Well, a few weeks ago little Harry was lost, and his grandmother was almost ill from fear that he was drowned. The whole village was out searching for him, and his grandmother was sitting at home crying, when in walked the kitten, nearly a grown cat now, and looked up in her face, and mewed, as much as to say, ‘don’t cry, I know where your little Harry is, follow me,’ and then ran to the door. She did follow, and the kitten took her to the corn field, and behind a stack of fodder there was little Harry fast asleep.

“Aunt Graham says that the grandmother had her reward, even in this life, for her kindness to a dumb creature.”

“Dear Grandma,” wrote Ellen the next day

after her return to the city, "I gave mamma the bird and the nest for her birthday present, and she was pleased, and said it was not only a pretty present and a curiosity, but more than all, an object lesson to me. I did not ask then what she meant, but to-day I said to her, Mamma, I never look at it but I say to myself 'Ellen, never be disobedient, if you are you will be sorry like you were all the time the chain was lost,' and mamma smiled and said that was the object lesson."

"Dear Ellen," wrote Sally, "you know I told you that Cousin Horace was sullen. Well, he is not sullen any more, but is one of the best boys that ever was, and kind to Cousin Johnny who just loves him. And, Ellen, I saved all the money that Miss Wood's father gave me for arranging bouquets, and at Christmas bought papa a big armchair, and mamma a high-backed rocking-chair to rest in when they are tired. Your grandma got them for me and kept them at her house until Christmas morning.

"And, O Ellen, I have something else to tell you. There is to be a Junior Christian Endeavor Society of the scholars in our Sunday-school; your Aunt Lizzie is to start it when the roads get good in the spring, and Cousin Horace, and Johnny, and I have put our names down, but I will always keep our dear little Helping

Hand card, although we are to have a bigger pledge."

"Dear Mrs. Elliot," wrote Leo's mother, "you remember my telling you in one of my letters of Elmer Ware repeating in the station-house the words, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life,' and the answer, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved?' Miss Ashton, his Sunday-school teacher, tells me that a policeman who heard him was so impressed by the words that he had no peace of mind until he gave his heart to the Saviour. His boys now come to Sunday-school, and are in Miss Ashton's class."

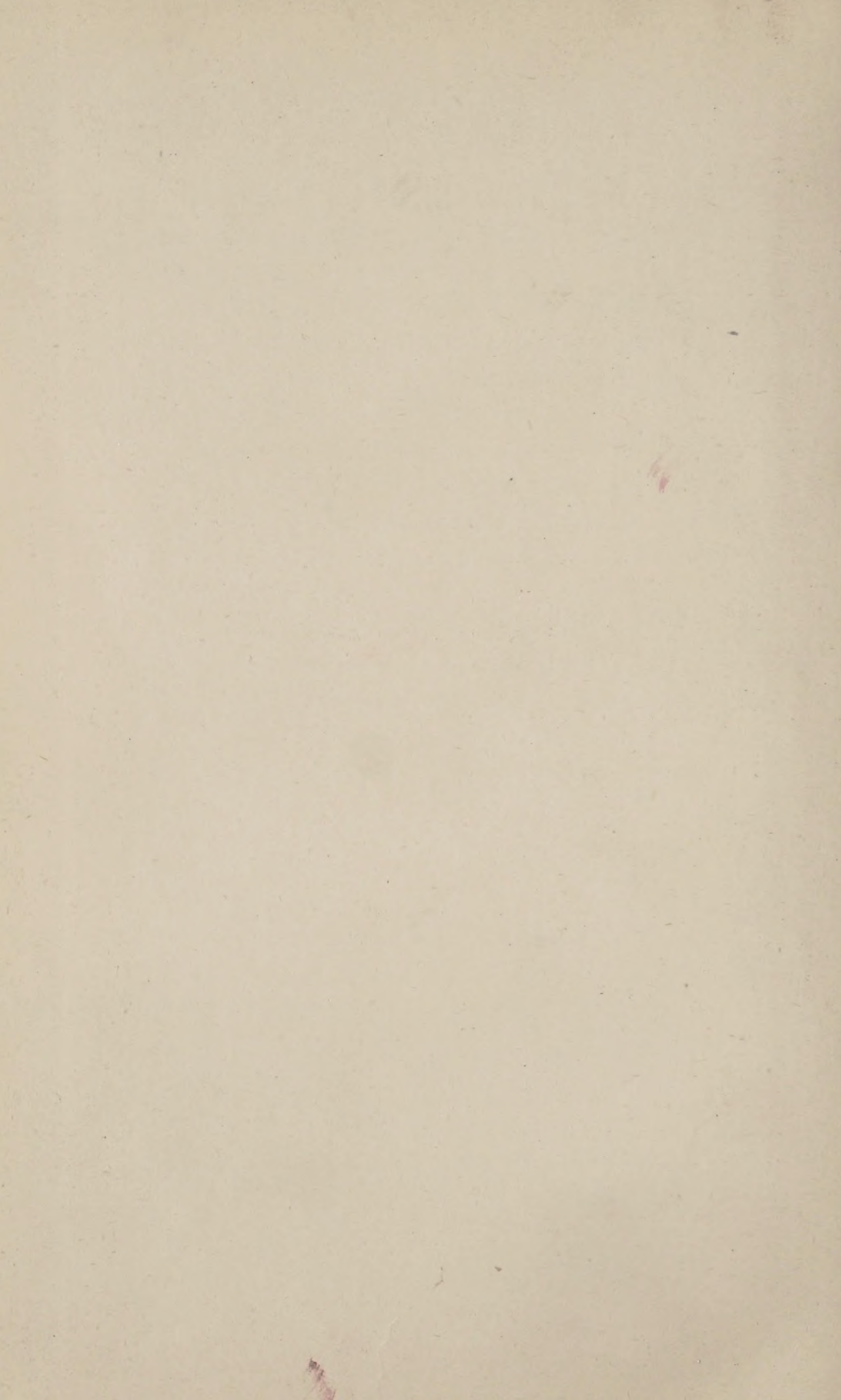
"Dear Horace," wrote Leo, "you remember my telling you that Elmer Ware is in my grandfather's office? Well, grandfather thinks so much of him that he is helping him to get a good education, and he is going to be a minister. And I have something else to tell you, and that is that last Sunday I showed the Helping Hand card that grandma Elliot gave me, to Miss Ashton, and she said it was an excellent help to keep young people in the right path. Then she told me that a children's Christian Endeavor Society was in the church, and asked me if I would not like to join it, and Elmer and I are going to the meeting next Sunday afternoon, and Miss Ashton, who is president of

the Young People's Christian Endeavor is going to introduce us, and when I write next time I will tell you all about it."

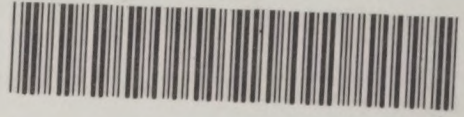
"Dear mother," wrote Ellen's mother to Mrs. Elliot, "I shall always be glad that the dear children had the happy summer with you, their lives are now so full of interest.

"The little Helping Hand Society you formed has proved so dear to them that they have joined the Children's Christian Endeavor Society of the church, and are trying to be faithful members.

"Leo's mother, Mrs. Endicott, and I, often hear them repeating the good things you told them when you gathered them about you in the evenings. You have done much to help them in Christian living; you are truly a mother in Israel."



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